

A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK

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DISSERTATION  
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION  
THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES  
UNIVERSITY OF BRIDGEPORT

CONNECTICUT

2012

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK**

Peter Ekerette Udo Umoh

Nigeria inherited a colonial educational framework at independence from Britain on October 1<sup>st</sup> 1960. The systemic thrust of this education centered on the liberal arts modality and not the sciences. This system of education was formulated to serve the colonial interest which was at the center of colonial policy formulation whereas the interest of Nigeria atrophied at the periphery. This arrangement has not worked well for Nigeria. Presently, Nigerian education is in crisis. The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a relationship between the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods of the evolution of the Nigerian educational framework. The study further sought to understand what was behind the crisis in Nigerian education so as to make recommendations for a different way forward. To find a way forward, a paradigm shift from the status quo is needed. This study used the qualitative methodology. Purposeful and random sampling methods were used to gather data. At the heart of the study was the work of a focus group that discussed and answered a set of questions related to the study. In all, four groups in Nigeria participated in the study. The study found that there was a relationship between the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods of the evolution of the Nigerian educational framework. The study also showed that, embedded within the educational system inherited at independence, were cultural and other values that have created a dissonance in the Nigerian, between the centeredness of his African roots, and, the acquired Western frame of reference. The study concludes that policy formulation must actually be put in practice. It further concludes that adequate and sustained funding should be at the heart of the paradigm shift. The study recommends that Nigeria must look within Africa's rich repository of culture to harness a new way forward.

## **Acknowledgement**

I thank my parents Obong Patrick Akpan Umoh (1932-2009) and Mrs. Elizabeth Patrick Umoh whose foundational love has grounded me in all that I have done in life. My father was first class in all he did as Student, Teacher, Headmaster and School Administrator, Businessman and Politician. His standard for discipline and success continues to guide me and the family. By teaching, I have followed in my father's footsteps. My mother is a patient angel who taught me my ABCs. She is the proud mother of 10 children and has such patience and strength of character that she is a steady influence within and outside the family. I acknowledge my siblings: Grace, Kate, Martin (1963-2007), Benny, Augustine, ImaObong and Helen, Kufre and Victor.

I thank my teachers and professors through many years of education. Their encouragement and confidence in my academic pursuit has led to this doctorate: Rev. Dr. Kenneth Enang - Principal, Mr. Uko - History Teacher and Mr. Etim - Literature and Drama Teacher. They allowed me to dream big and sowed within my soul as a teenager, the hunger for life-long learning. I thank Rev. Drs. Ndugbu, Onwanibe, and Akam who turned me onto the love of philosophical enquiry and a hunger for higher learning. I thank Very Rev. Dr. David Q. Liptak, who taught me Systematic Theology and directly told me to pursue doctoral studies. I thank Most Rev. Daniel P. Reilly and former Bishop of Norwich, whose vision of greater justice facilitated my earlier studies in the United States. I am indebted for life to the Rev. Francis F. O'Keeffe whose love for me built the bridge to my future.

I am grateful to my friends whose love and support has been priceless: Jim, Cecile and the Thompson family, Patience, Dr. Diez, Dr. K. Moseley, Monica, Dr. Richard and Martha Morse. To my classmates from Queen of Apostles who remain to me brothers than friends: Mr. Godwin Etokakpan, MBA, Rev. Dr. Anietie Akata and Dr. Isidore Udoh. I acknowledge my good friends; Prof. Philip UdoInyang, Prof. Offiong Aqua, Prof. Hilary Inyang, Dr. Nsidibe Ikpe (d.2005), and Dr. Victor Udo. Their friendship has taught me leadership on the global stage. I will like to thank my mentors in life, The

Right Rev. Msg. Peter A. Inyangetoh, Ph.D. and Dr. Etim Udowana for their advice and guidance. To members of my cohort in the Ed.D program at the University of Bridgeport; our cooperation has yielded lasting fruits. Thanks for the shared journey.

I acknowledge the Free and Compulsory Education policy of Barr. Godswill O. Akpabio, Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. By funding and making education free, he has proactively opened access to educational equity in the region and changed the options of the poor by creating opportunity for success through learning.

This study would not have been a reality without the support and direction of my Dissertation Committee. I am deeply indebted to Prof. Robert E. Kirschmann, Ph.D., Chairman Dissertation Committee, for his singular support and confidence in me. I am grateful to Prof. Nelson Ngoh, Ph.D, who took the time to give me page by page insights and directions that sharpened my writing. To Afrah Richmond, Ph.D (Harvard) who brought a unique critique that challenged and improved the focus of this work. Their professionalism has enabled me to complete this research.

To all who have supported me to arrive at this stage of my life's journey; I say Thank You.

*Life is a journey not a destination.*

*It is not happens to you in life that matters, it is how you handle it.*

*Ette unen akadia iton. Eka unen akadie iton. Isideghe nyen unen idia iton esit etek eka.*

*"I know I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Hope in God, hold firm; take heart, hope in the Lord!" Ps. 27: 13-14*

## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my daughter Nsidibe IniObong Udo Umoh.

Her love is unconditional and her smile, a comfort to my soul.

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This group was aware of the historical heritage of the colonial educational system that produced the grammar school-liberal arts nature of Nigerian education and the elitism that was attached to it. They

believed that it was the elitist nature of that inherited system that prized being a university graduate higher than what the graduate studied in university or if the graduate was proficient in the learned discipline. They also believed that the educational system of the past (i.e. early post-colonial 1960-1980) was better as it had more structure and discipline and graduates could defend (back up) their diplomas or certificates. They also pointed out that colonial and early post-colonial education was not a thing of the masses but the select few which made it more prestigious.....	135
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They blamed the military governments (especially those in power 1983-1999) for paying lip service to the National Policies for Education as promulgated by the various governments since independence. They also blamed the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) of the IMF for helping destroy the educational system built up in the 1960-1970s. The teachers and administration said that secondary education was stable and rapidly growing after independence in 1960. In the 1970's it broadly expanded and was also fully funded on account of the oil boom of the 1970s. When the oil boom collapsed in the mid1980s, education funding suffered massively. And under the military it got really worse as the local currency was devalued in the 1980s at the behest of the IMF driven SAP. The economy collapsed and education suffered as money was relocated to other priorities. ....	136
Many good teachers left teaching during this period in search of alternate employment. This led to understaffing problems. According to the group, the government still, has not fully staffed the schools since the late 1980s through the 2000s. This has affected several generations of students and negatively affected school morale and the quality of education passed on. They also pointed to other internal pressures like corruption and the pressure for paper qualification instead of skills as contributing to the falling standards of education. They pointed out that most teachers feel that their jobs are more of a vocation (a calling) than a career and so are committed. They however feel handicapped by the government's historical mismanagement of the system. Nigeria has a top down centralized educational system with very limited local autonomy across the country. ....	137
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According to the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, out of millions of students that sit for the external exit exam yearly in secondary school, the average pass rate is 20%. This low pass rate and the general corruption in the society led to exam malpractices. In some cases teachers got involved for pay in helping students cheat during external exams. They saw the future of education positively when the appropriate changes and funding have been fully rolled out by government and the appropriate authorities..... 137

They believed that their students could compete with others around the world. With adequate modern teaching tools to teach with and the prerequisite professional development they had confidence they could produce students who could compete globally. However, they believed that it will take a few more years before the system catches up for the years when the system was abandoned by the government. The researcher found the teachers to be well trained and capable but handicapped by years of limited funding and the visible effects of such on structures, morale and the quality of education as measured by student outcomes. As mentioned earlier, in the passing out external examination taken at the end of secondary education, about 80% of the students do not pass (Federal Government of Nigeria 2008). This is a very high number and the reason may have to do with the dysfunction within the system. .... 138

**(c) (ii) Principals:** All three principals were in agreement with the conclusions of their teachers and pointed to funding as the greatest challenge to their success as key administrators. They were all knowledgeable about the colonial heritage of the Nigerian educational framework and how this has negatively affected the foundational formulations of Nigeria’s educational policies over the years since independence in 1960. They felt frustrated because they knew what to do to initiate positive change at the school level to match education policy to practice. Their frustration is based off being continuously handicapped by government bureaucracies either at the state level or at the federal levels. As mentioned earlier, Nigeria has a top down centralized education system that leaves very little or no room for local input. .... 138

They blamed low morale among their teachers not as a result of a lack of technical skills or capacities in teaching but on low wages. They believed they needed education reform especially in the curriculum so they could excise unnecessary and irrelevant materials from what is actually taught in their schools. They will also like to excise the inherited and archaic aspects of the colonial education heritage that still remain on the text books or practice. .... 139

They felt they do not have a free hand in hiring and firing as administration is centrally controlled. They believed that the Nigerian educational framework is not working within the parameters of the Nigerian Policy on Education as the funding has not been there to match the demands of policy to practice. They acknowledged the current free education program and the current funding levels as positive change but pointed out that the positive changes are too new to make up years of under-funding and bad policies. They agreed with their teachers that sustained change was a long term endeavor..... 139

All three principals hold advanced degrees. One was a former Commissioner of Education. She was trained in Nigeria and the United Kingdom and was well versed in what education ought to be. She believed the Nigerian educational framework in theory and practice still needed to harmonize for systemic coherence. She also believed that for Nigeria to truly advance and develop, it needed to evolve a truly Nigerian philosophy of education different from the inherited colonial system and

framework. She pointed out that due to various reasons including ignorance; most Nigerians still believed that the inherited colonial system was better than the educational system today..... 139

It appears from interviewing the principals that all had great professional experience and knowledge of their jobs. They were also the most knowledgeable about the pre-colonial, the colonial and the post-colonial factors that continue to affect modern day educational formulation and practice in Nigeria. They all had a great appreciation for the problems within the Nigerian education system. The principals believed that had the government truly and fully funded Nigeria's stated goals for education in the national policy, Nigerian education would have been on par with other comparable countries. As this has not been the case, Nigerian educators in the past fifty years since independence have been handicapped in delivering the education needed for Nigeria's development. They as a group had confidence in their teachers and saw them as fully committed to teaching to make a difference. Their hope for an improved education system hinged on sustained funding by the government..... 140

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This study further sought to understand the role played the government in advancing its education goals. The Commissioner for Education is the highest ranking education officer at the state level with the Minister of education being the equivalent at the federal level. The Commissioner affirmed problems within the system as pointed out by others. He pointed to the free education implemented by his state government (Akwa Ibom) as a step in the right direction. For him, free education is the great equalizer that engenders government push for equality, equity of access and gender equity for women. .... 140

He also believed that government abandonment of fully funding education in the past has contributed immensely to many of the problems experienced by the system presently. He affirmed that in the state of Akwa Ibom, education (primary/secondary) is fully funded by the present state government. He pointed out to changes and developments in the education sector in the state. The researcher was made aware of photographs taken before and after for many of the rehabilitated school buildings. There were also some newly constructed class room blocks across the entire state. Nearly all the public schools across the entire state of Akwa Ibom have directly experienced positive changes in the learning environments of their schools. According to the commissioner, this was as a result of the prioritization of education by the present government in Akwa Ibom State. .... 140

This researcher affirmed the changes and developments referenced by the commissioner when the researcher visited the schools. The researcher saw the newly built structures and the presence of new technologies among other improvements; however some of these were not in use as mentioned earlier as there was no electricity. .... 141

The commissioner confirmed that because the student population in Akwa Ibom has risen from about 300,000 to about 600,000 in a few years (on account of the free education policy in the state), the government is struggling to ramp up manpower and other resources in order to meet the demands created by the free education in the state. The Commissioner believed that in spite of the challenges caused by the increasing number of students in the system there was no turning back on the free education policy as such was now enshrined by law. There was no lack of governmental will to follow through, all that is needed was time for the government plans and changes to fully become implemented and thus become manifest. He was thus very enthusiastically hopeful for education in Akwa Ibom State as a microcosm of Nigeria. As changes come into place one at a time, he believed the

system was changing for the better. He believed also that Nigeria has the capacity to produce students that should be able to compete in a digital 21 <sup>st</sup> century society.....	141
The researcher notes that the commissioner appeared knowledgeable about the historical education formulation in the country and how such has affected practice. According to him only 18% of high school graduates in the state enter the university or other tertiary institutions which leaves behind hundreds of thousands without marketable job skills or formal alternative educational routes after high school. He blamed this on the inherited colonial educational framework that has cranked out students from schools without giving them real world job skills. He also pointed out that unlike countries like the United States; Nigeria did not have adequate and legitimate middle skills and middle management institutions to capture the massive number of students graduating from High school.....	142
He believed that the Nigerian society has bought too deeply into the elitism of attaining a university education no matter in what discipline without equal focus on what you do with the degree after completion. He saw the focus on paper qualifications within the employment sector and within the society in general as bad for Nigerian education and the developmental thrust of the national policy for education. The drive for paper qualification as a tool for upward mobility, social and economic, showed how deeply ingrained in the collective consciousness of the country is the colonial framework that rewarded “certification”. To be “educated” or “learned” was still more important than to be able to create or produce things with your hands. And this situation continues to persist, in spite of such framework not meeting the needs of the current Nigerian society on the practical and developmental planes. ....	142
He positioned himself as a chief education administrator as being among those in the nation who are cognizant of Nigeria’s education policy within the context of the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial dynamics. He surprisingly confirmed that there was indeed a cultural dissonance between the colonial education framework and the African cultural society. For him that dissonance produced the elite class that taught several generations the colonial formulation of education. He saw that old system (liberal arts based) as having not produced a broad technical class within Nigeria with the expertise to meet the technical needs of Nigeria. And so, in spite of the number of educated Nigerians, there remains a major gap within the professional expertise needed to grow and develop the Nigerian society. He believed that a major shift was needed in the formulation of a new educational policy and systemic structures for the current Nigeria society. He saw this shift as a key factor in solving the crisis within the Nigeria education system. ....	143
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This study employed the descriptive analytic methodology to examine the foundational framework of the Nigerian educational system. It also examined the crisis within the system. The study sought finally to make recommendations for a way forward. Four groups participated in the study answering questions based on the research questions and questions used for the focus group at UNIYO. In Chapter Five the summary of the study based on the analysis of the findings in Chapter Four will be presented with conclusions based on the research questions and the data from the study. It will show that the Nigerian education framework needs a paradigm shift in policy formulation, administration and curriculum. Finally Chapter Five will present recommendations and implications for further research. ....	143
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## **Chapter One**

Nigerian education is in crisis (Aluede, 2006; Ezeoke, 2011). Nigeria inherited a liberal arts educational system from the British and that system is still in place without much change. There is a high demand for science and technology education in Nigeria but the institutional structures in place have not been able to meet this demand. Nigeria has the largest student population in Africa, about 30 million (US Embassy Nigeria, 2011) which implies a need for an efficient education managing agency (Obanya, 2005). The system in place lacks the capacity and the efficiency to deliver the technology driven education of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Nigeria is a complex society with over 350 tribes and over 500 languages which gives it its distinctive character (CIA, 2012; Crozier & Blench, 1992; Grimes & Grimes 1996). Nigeria's problems are also complex and many. As a former British colony, it is still transitioning from being colonized and this has political, economic and social ramifications. There is a lack of a sense of true national identity and national unity as loyalties are still closer to the ethnic groups or the regions than the nation. Politically there has been no sustained leadership since independence and it has been historically unstable and the economy collapsed under extended military rule.

In the recent past, the image of this country has suffered because of antisocial and criminal activities. Nigeria scored 27 percent in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) in 2008 by Transparency International (Ukpong, 2008)... Many Nigerians have attributed these worrisome behaviours to socioeconomic and political paralysis, with sluggish economy, hunger, unreliable power supply, corruption in high places, poverty, structural unemployment, a dearth of social amenities, and electoral flaws (Onuoha, 2009, Kilete, 2009, Agbese, 2009 in Unagha & Ibenne, 2009).

Though blessed with natural resources like oil, poor management and corruption have turned this resource into a source of environmental pollution. The youths are restive. There is religious

tension and violence. Suicide bombings and nationwide insecurity have now created a sense of uncertainty about life and property. The government has failed to deliver a consistent response to these problems. Under these conditions the education sector suffered massive neglect (Ayayi, 2007).

Nigeria is the largest country in Africa with an estimated population of 158 million people (World Bank, 2011). Educating the Nigerian population is a necessity for national development and growth and has been identified as a national policy by a variety of Nigerian governments through its National Policy on Education (NPE) (Ayeni, 2000). Nigeria seeks to use education to build human capacity and also to formulate policies and strategies so that education fully contributes to sustainable development in the country (NPE, 2005). Efforts have been expended to articulate these national and educational policies by government but these policies have neither delivered the desired results nor met the policy objectives (Aluede, 2006).

There is ambiguity in how Nigerian education has been studied and policies formulated primarily due to the continuing impact of cultural and educational influences from Europe and Africa still emerging from colonial influence. Molefi Asante argues that “Each centered person becomes an owner not a renter of knowledge” (Asante, 1994; Kane, 1963 in Jagusah, 2001). “African educational policies are therefore carried out in a cultural and educational policy and developmental vacuum in terms of African people’s everyday lives” (Jagusah, 2001). There is a dissonance between education policies and practices caused by a variety of variables (Aluede, 2006). Elaborating further, Aluede references Ayeni and says:

In fact, many of the changes in educational policies in Nigeria have been described as the product of confusion (Ayeni, 2000). There is therefore, a high level of uncertainties, which is beclouding meaningful planning in Nigeria’s educational system. This can be



very dangerous particularly as the future of Nigeria and Nigerians will be determined by the level of education her nationals have acquired.

This overall state of confusion is a present and continuing reality. According to the *Nigerian Education Sector Diagnosis*, government interference is part of this confusion; for instance, “[b]etween 1977 and 1999...private universities were banned and unbanned twice (1977, 1984) (1979, 1999) respectively by military and civilian governments” (Obanya, 2005). These government actions negatively affected Nigerian students eager to acquire tertiary education and in spite of the growing demands for higher learning in the country.

Within a global context, education is the tool that produces trained labor and builds human capacity. According to the World Bank, “Education is one of the most powerful instruments for reducing poverty and inequality and lays a foundation for sustained economic growth” (World Bank, 2011). The implication here is that when the system of education is not functional, the people, especially the poor, and the economy suffer and the country cannot grow.

There is a historical disconnect between Nigerian educational policy and practice. In 1939 the British began to administer Nigeria along regional lines. With regional autonomy or self-rule 1954, the different regions within Nigeria adopted different educational policies to serve their local populations. There was no unified homogenous educational policy for Nigeria until 1976. Earlier in 1955, the Western Regional House, launched a free education program called the Universal Primary Education (UPE) under the foresight and leadership of Chief Obafemi Owolowo, Regional Premier for the Western Region. This action placed the Western region on a fast paced educational growth plan and tradition that set the region up to produce many of the future leaders of the country and put it ahead of the other regions. In 1957, the Eastern Regional House under the leadership of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, copied the Western regional formula and

launched the UPE in the Eastern Region of Nigeria. While education was expanding in the West and East (Southern Nigeria), Northern Nigeria was lagging behind without a similar program. A disparity in educational access began to grow in the country between the North and South.

In 1976, The Federal Government of Nigeria intervened and introduced the UPE for the entire country. With this federal policy and program, primary education in Nigeria became regularized throughout the country. The differences of access to education between the North and the South became accordingly bridged by government policy (Itedjere, 1997). The number of students in schools across the country expanded as many young people now attended school than ever before. The 1976 UPE program also gave opportunity to those affected by the Nigerian civil war 1967-1970 who either dropped out of school to fight in the war or had been refugees because of the war.

Since 1976, several governments in Nigeria have updated/changed the thrust of the NPE (1981, 1990, 1999) to fit the exigency of the particular government in power, however, Nigerian education still remains in crisis at all levels (Aluede, 2006). Decades after independence, education in Nigeria has not produced the needed manpower and necessary technical expertise to manage the vast natural resources available in the country. The result is a dearth of economic and socio-political development (Obanya, (ed.) 2005) and so as earlier stated, Nigerian education is in crisis. According to Aluede (2006)

the UPE of 1977 was unsuccessful; because the Federal Government of Nigeria underestimated the number of pupils that would want to benefit from such a programme, could not also determine the number of teachers, school buildings and the amount of

money that would be required to make the program functional. It was therefore abandoned.



Map of Nigeria showing the major cities after Independence

Source: CIA World Facts Book, Nigeria, retrieved 1/24/2012

In 1999, the government of Olusegun Obasanjo, President of Nigeria 1999-2007, in response to the crisis, launched the Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy in Sokoto, Nigeria.

“The training of children and adolescents in the norms and aspirations of the nation is a very veritable instrument for national integration and development. It was expected that educational reforms or re-organisation would be carried out to enable Nigeria’s education cater for the future professional needs (Ayeni, 2000 in Aluede, 2006).

Restructuring the system was important in order to enable optimal results from the sought after objectives of education. The Federal Government’s involvement in the organization of the UBE program was therefore necessary if the integration of the nationals was to be achieved. The goals

of the Nigerian policy on education include the following: teaching the culture of the Nigerian society, the knowledge of literacy, numeracy and the ability to communicate. Other goals include laying a sound foundation for scientific and reflective thinking, character and moral training, the development of a sound attitude and the ability to adapt to changing environments (Federal Government of Nigeria, 1981 in Aluede 2006). The realization of these goals in practice is different from the policy that is on paper. It is this disconnect between policy and practice that has contributed to the dysfunction within the Nigerian educational system.

There are different ways to look at a research problem. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009), “[a] problem can be anything that a person finds unsatisfactory or unsettling, a difficulty of sort, a state of affairs that needs to be changed, anything that is not working as well as it might.” They go on to say that “[p]roblems involve areas of concern to researchers, conditions they want to improve, difficulties they want to eliminate, questions for which they seek answers”(p.27).

This study is interested in finding a way out of the crisis in Nigerian education in addition to looking deeper at the issues behind the crisis. Nigeria’s present realities: socio-political, cultural, economic and educational are intertwined with its past as a former colony of the British Empire. This research assumes that what lies at the core of the dysfunction that produces the crisis in Nigerian (African) education is this: not fully acknowledging in the education of the Nigerian (African) the centeredness of the African past, in the construction of the African present. The Nigerian educational system accordingly is in crisis and needs a paradigm shift if Nigerian education is to find a way forward.

The crisis is anchored in Nigeria's peculiar history of imperially amalgamated heterogeneous tribes and cultures to create a syncretic colonial Nigeria. Also, the inherited British colonial educational framework became the template for educating the teachers that educated successive generations of Nigerians before and since independence in 1960. That particular framework was set up by the British to serve primarily the welfare and the needs of the British colonializing enterprise with passing regard to the deep specificity of the heterogeneity of the vast lands that became Nigeria.

Fifty years after independence (1960-2010), Nigerian is united as a nation but the Nigerian education system is facing a plethora of challenges. This is why there has to be a shift in the thinking behind the policy thrust of education and the practice of education in order to move the educational system forward to meet its set goals. This research will argue that unless there is a paradigm shift equally in policy formulation and in the delivery of policy; the Nigeria will continue to be unable to meet its stated educational goals.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the foundational framework of the Nigerian educational system.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

### **Research Questions:**

1. To what extent did an educational system exist in Nigeria before colonization?
2. What was the intent and purpose of the British colonial education system?
3. To what extent is the inherited colonial education framework still active in Nigerian post-colonial education policy and practice?

4. Is the Nigerian educational framework and system working within the parameters of the National Policy on Education?
5. What is working in the Nigerian educational system and what is not working and what are the causes?
6. Is the Nigerian educational system competitive in a digital 21<sup>st</sup> century global society and are students and graduates of the system confident in the education they receive?
7. Is there hope for the present educational system in Nigeria and is it sustainable considering poor management, negative socio-political and economic adversities?

### **Significance of the Study**

This study provided significant value to the common body of knowledge of education and educational leadership. Nigeria is a major political and economic force in Africa (Ostergard, 2000). Within African and global contexts, Nigeria is the largest black nation in the world, with an estimated population of 158 million (World Bank, 2011), with Brazil as a distant second (World Bank, 2011). Nigeria's large population places on Nigeria, a necessary leadership role among other African nations. In the past, many have referred to Nigeria as the giant of Africa. The size of the population and its leadership role places on Nigeria significant global relevance.

As the 10<sup>th</sup> largest producer of petroleum in the world (CIA World Fact Book, 2011) and a leading member of the Oil Producing Economic Countries (OPEC), Nigeria is an energy giant and accordingly, what affects Nigeria, affects the world that rely on Nigerian petroleum. It is therefore important to understand and study the system of education that undergirds this massive African country. It is also important to analyze the framework that produces the human capital and manpower necessary to manage Nigeria's economic, political development and social evolution (Bates, 2005).

Africa in general and Nigeria in particular have a myriad of multipronged problems (Bates, 2005) that trickle down to all facets of the continent's institutions including the education establishment. A functional educational framework, as the necessary foundation to Nigeria's future as an emerging economic powerhouse, is worthy of study. The current educational framework seems not to produce the needed technical expertise to manage Nigeria's vast natural resources (Obanya, 2001); it is therefore important for Nigerians to understand why this is so and if there is a way forward.

There is still a significant reliance on foreign expertise (CIA World Fact Book, 2011) and where there was local expertise, there is the problem of brain drain (Yaqub, 2007) whereby for political and economic and other reasons, talented Nigerians immigrate to other countries taking their human capital and expertise with them and creating gaps in the local talent base. According to Oni (2000), "[t]he underutilisation of existing capacity and the loss of same through brain drain have made Africa to remain underdeveloped." This is one of the reasons that African countries continue to make up most of the poorest societies in the world with very low indicators of socio-economic development (World Bank, 2011).

The Nigerian government seeks to expand its development in the present century through industrialization (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2011). Good education and proper socio-cultural orientation is needed for this industrialization to be implanted sustainably. This study is therefore important to Nigerian policy makers at the economic level and implementers of such policy at the frontline levels of industry.

This study is also significant to the entire system of education in Nigeria (public and private, formal and informal) from the Federal Ministry of Education under the Honorable

Minister of Education, to the State levels under the various Commissioners of Education, and to other education policy makers at the national and state levels. It is also significant to education administrators from the Primary-Secondary to the tertiary levels as they translate and implement national educational policies in their classrooms.

I am deeply passionate about education and its role in transforming individuals and society especially the poor. As an educator myself, and a product of the Nigerian system of education, it is important to me that the Nigerian educational system is functionally efficient to enable the system to become internally relevant and globally competitive. As a beneficiary and a graduate of the United States' educational system, I also have a firsthand experience of a functional educational platform that efficiently serves the complex demands of America's national and global goals. The combination of my Nigerian/American educational experiences puts me in a unique position to have an appreciation for and an understanding of both systems. It is therefore my hope that this study will help me and others to understand better, in what ways I can contribute to the Nigerian educational system so that it evolves efficiently and competitively. I also hope this study will provide recommendations to improve the Nigerian educational framework, philosophy and delivery systems. I feel, as a stakeholder, that the educational outcomes in Nigeria ought to be measured in student outcomes and not by political expediencies.

Other stakeholders to whom this study is significant include Nigerian educational administrative entities like; The National Primary School Commission (NPEC), the National Secondary Educational Commission (NSEC), The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), The National Business and Technical Education Board (NABTEB), the Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC), State Primary School Boards(SPEB), State Universal Education Boards (SUBEB) and other similar entities engaged in Nigerian education.



This study is significant to National Community Based Organizations (NCBO) and international collaborative nonprofit agencies (Non Profit Organizations [NGO]), chief among these; the United Nations Children and Education Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). These entities have a history of involvement in collaborations with the Nigerian educational system to meet developmental objectives.

On a personal note, I am totally committed to the paradigm that education is the salvation of the Black man. By this is meant that education is the tool needed and necessary to free Africans from mental slavery and colonial mentality so they can do for themselves by themselves. I am aware of the natural resources present on the African continent and also aware of the poverty and political instability that have interfered with Africa's ability to join other developing nations on the march to greater economic and socio-political progress. I also know that unless African education is authentically rooted within its Africanness and cultural moorings, the educated African will continue to suffer from the confusion of educational and cultural syncretism. This produces a condition of uncertain identity between African roots and its cultural heritage and the learned European colonial frame of reference. I believe that articulating an African educational framework that is African in its cultural roots and yet global in its breadth, is the path to overcoming the many challenges that face Africa in this new century.

## Definition of Terms

**Colonialism:** exploitation by a stronger country of weaker one; the use of the weaker country's resources to strengthen and enrich the stronger country. The term connotes using, victimization, exploitation - an act that exploits or victimizes someone (treats them unfairly); "capitalistic exploitation of the working class"; "paying Blacks less and charging them more is a form of victimization" (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/colonialism> retrieved 2/1/2012).

**Colonial educational system:** a pedagogical typology set up by the British government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) like churches in Nigeria providing basic reading, writing and arithmetic for the purposes of serving the needs of the colonial government and/or the churches.

**Development:** a process of improvement and advancement for social and economic progress.

**Educational framework:** The underlying philosophical and ideological constructs that provide the foundation for educational policies and educational practice.

**Educational institutions:** formal and informal systems of passing on skills and knowledge including the traditional system of apprenticeship and the formal system of the classroom.

**Educational System:** a formal structure for the transmitting of knowledge and/or skills generally managed by the government.

**Millennium Development Goals:** Goals set by the United Nations and adopted by many countries including Nigeria viz: End poverty and Hunger, Universal Education, Gender Equality, Child Health, Maternal Health, Combat HIV/AIDS, Environmental Sustainability and Global partnership.

**Neocolonialism** - control by a powerful country of its former colonies (or other less developed countries) by economic pressures (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/colonialism> retrieved 2/1/2012).

**Nigeria**: An independent West African nation of about 158 million in population and over 350 distinct languages.

**Pre-colonial Nigeria**: The geo political and cultural areas that became Nigeria under the British in 1914.

**Post-colonial Nigeria**: The Nigeria nation after October 1, 1960 -the day of Independence from Great Britain.

**Sustainability**: understood within the context of “The Brundtland Commission’s Key Concepts for Sustainability”:

- Today’s needs should not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs,
- A direct link exists between the economy and environment,
- The needs of the poor in all nations must be met,
- In order for our environment to be protected, the economic conditions of the world’s poor must be improved,
- In all our actions, we must consider the impact upon future generations.” (Bruntland, 1987)

**Sustainable development**: “seeks to meet the needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet those of the future.” (Bruntland, 1987)

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study was limited to an examination of the educational framework and system in one country (Nigeria) on a continent (Africa) with similar problems. The study was delimited to the period 1999 – 2010. The validity of this study will depend in part on the degree to which participants will be honest in their responses. This study was also limited to available records from Nigeria which are often not accurate and/or not up to date. Finding accurate records is difficult and when found there are always questions as to reliability. A World Bank Report of human development sector had this to say about accessing data for educational spending Nigeria: “The lack of knowledge of educational expenditures in Nigeria is not a recent phenomena. The last detailed and comprehensive effort to describe the situation was made in 1965, utilizing data up to 1962” (Callaway and Musone, 1965 in Hinchliffe, 2002). This situation cuts across other areas of research. Another limitation will be the cultural and political interpretation of the “historical record” as Nigeria is not a homogeneous country but a diversified country of over 350 languages and tribes.

### **Organization of the Study**

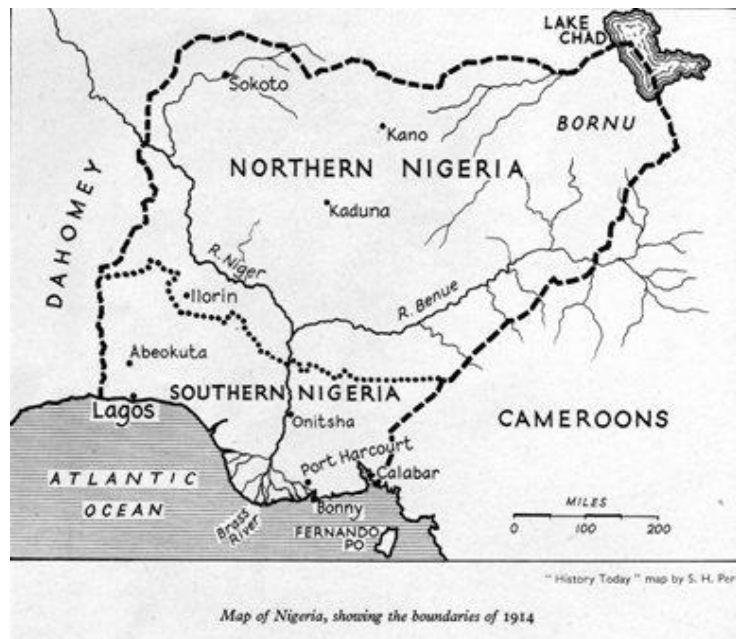
This study was organized in five chapters. Chapter one presented the introduction, statement of the problem, definition of terms, significance of the study, limitations of the study, and the organization of the study. Chapter two presented the review of literature reflective of the historical examination of the educational framework and system in Nigeria before colonialism, during colonialism and after colonialism. Chapter three presented the research methodology employed in this study. Chapter four presented the findings of the study. Chapter five presented the conclusions and recommendations for future research based upon the findings presented in chapter four.

## Chapter Two

### Review of Literature

#### British Nigeria:

The nation now known as Nigeria came about as the result of the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates and Lagos Colony in 1914 to create a new entity with the designation Nigeria, a name coined by Flora Louisa, journalist and writer and the wife of Lord Frederick Lugard, first Governor-General of Nigeria (1914-1919). He ruled Nigeria at this time as a united colony of Britain. Nigeria remained a British colony until it gained independence on October 1, 1960.



Map of Nigeria, showing the boundaries of 1914

Source: <http://www.google.com/imgres?q=geographical+map+of+nigeria>, retrieved 2/2/2012

The colonial government had colonial policies for different aspects of the colonizing enterprise including education. Most of these colonial policies were put in place by Lord Lugard himself forming a template to administer Nigeria. His administrative system was called indirect rule whereby the traditional administrative institutions were strengthened but left in place to administer while the colonial government agents supervised. These policies provide antecedents that would affect in time, the educational policies of Nigeria. Indirect rule as an administrative system recognized the administrative status quo of the traditional system of government (Fabunmi, 2004). Lugard believed that the Hausa-Fulani tribes were better administrators and better organized to rule over other tribes and the educated African elite. By ruling indirectly through the pre-existing native administrative system, the colonialists maximized their manpower resources. This explains how a large country in population and territory like Nigeria, could be administered by very few British colonialists.

Indirect rule also recognized the pre-existing Islamic educational structure in the Northern Protectorate. The implication of this recognition was that Christian Missionaries were not allowed to spread either Christianity or western education in the North. The missionaries concentrated their efforts in the Southern Protectorate and Lagos Colony. The North fell behind in education as western style education expanded elsewhere. This then explains the disparity in the education gap between the former Southern and Northern protectorates. At this writing, northern Nigeria has not caught up educationally with the rest of the country. Lugard's policy is not the only reason why the north is lagging behind; it however gives a historical context to how the north lost in bridging the gap and why the south is ahead educationally.

Gerhart's 1997 review of Lord Lugard's book, "The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa" (which was effectively a handbook for colonial administration) points to the comprehensive nature of colonial rule.

The definitive defense of British colonial rule in Africa by its most eminent practitioner, this work catalogued the vast variety of administrative and development issues in the heyday of empire: systems of land tenure, direct and indirect administration through indigenous authorities, taxation, agricultural and mineral exploitation, education, transport, trade, legal development, and the eradication of indigenous forms of slavery.

She goes on further to explain that:

Lugard conceded that British methods had not produced ideal results everywhere, and that the time was not yet foreseeable when complete independence would be feasible for African colonies, but he argued with assurance, contrary to the skepticism expressed by the British Labour Party, that Britain's rule was fundamentally benign. Pure philanthropy, he wrote, could of course never be the motive of empire, yet the welfare and advancement of African peoples was a strong guiding principle of British rule, part of its "dual mandate" of reciprocal benefit. Where native races were becoming restive, he declared, it was precisely because of their exposure to British values of liberty: "Their very discontent is a measure of their progress."

At independence in 1960, Nigeria inherited a system of education that had both a British colonial construct and a British philosophy of education. It became clear after independence that the inherited educational system was not serving the needs of the nascent nation and there was pressure for a new national policy on education which generated a lot of debate (Obanya, 2005).

The debates at all levels of education called for a system that met the needs of Nigeria as an independent nation on a growth path. Earlier in 1959, the Ashby Commission was set up study and report on the manpower needs of Nigeria for a period of twenty years (1960-1980). Members of the commission included three Americans, three Britons and three Nigerians. It was led by Sir Eric Ashby. The work of this commission is a landmark policy document for Nigerian education. According to Fabunmi (2004) the following makes is part of the Commission's report:

- The imbalance between one level of education and the other
- Limited admission opportunities for primary school leavers
- Few school teachers were qualified and certificated
- That the Nigerian education was parochial and literary
- Imbalance in the development of education between the North and South.

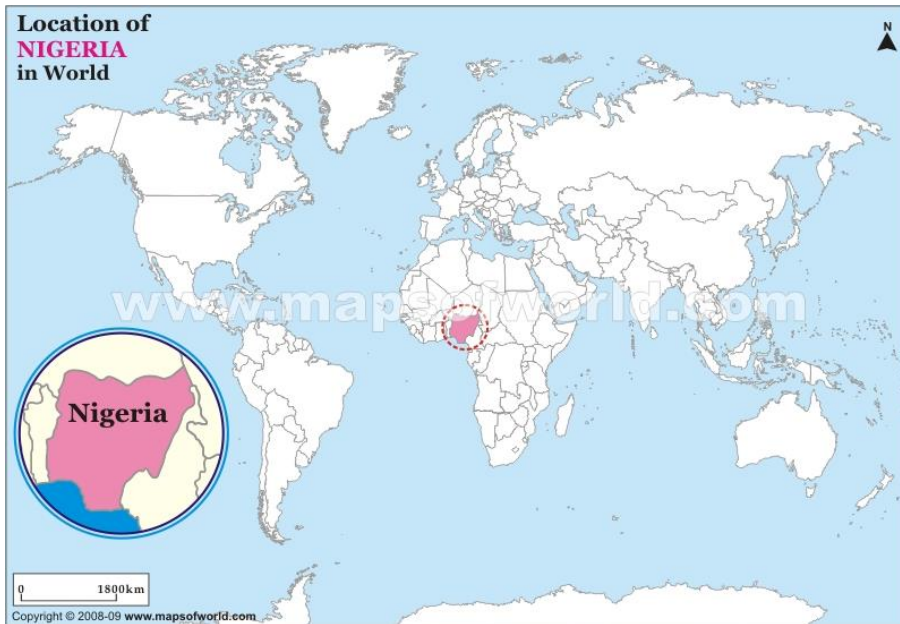
The most relevant section of the report to this study points out that the education of Nigeria was “parochial and literary” in 1959. The bulk of Nigerian education in 2012 remains the same after five decades. The imbalance between the North and the South persists. A Government policy statement, issued in January 1977 by the Federal Government of Nigeria, had presented the government's new philosophy of Nigerian education at all levels. Here are the specific national aims and objectives to which the education philosophy is linked:

- a) the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;
- b) the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society;
- c) the training of the mind in the understanding of the world; and



d) the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies, both mental and physical, as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society

The actualization of this lauded philosophy in practice has had many challenges and shortcomings as the philosophy has not produced the desired results.

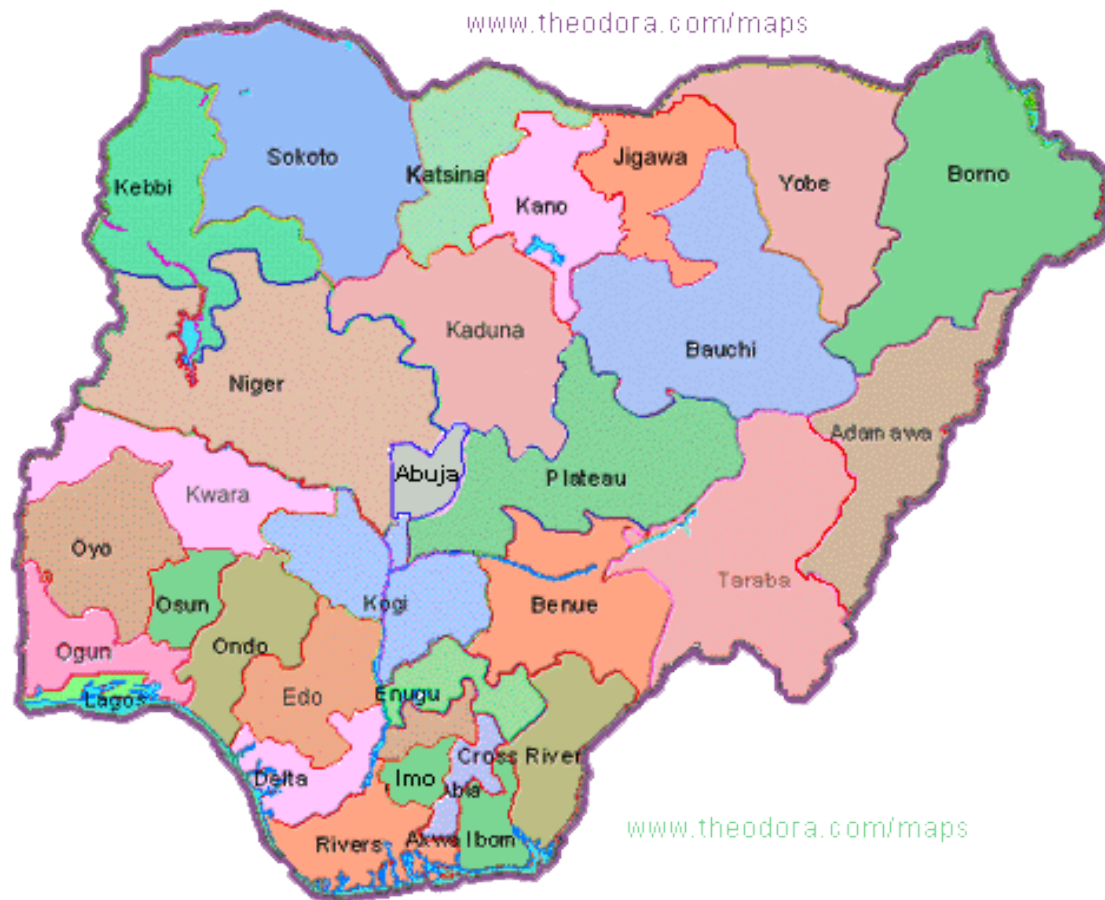


Source: <http://www.mapsofworld.com/nigeria/nigeria-location-map.html> 2012 retrieved 2/20/212

### **Nigeria: A History**

Nigeria became independent on October 1, 1960 from the British who had governed Nigeria for about 100 years. The effects of that colonialism and governance will reverberate through every facet of the nascent nation at independence and thereafter as British governance had equaled British imperialism.

2012

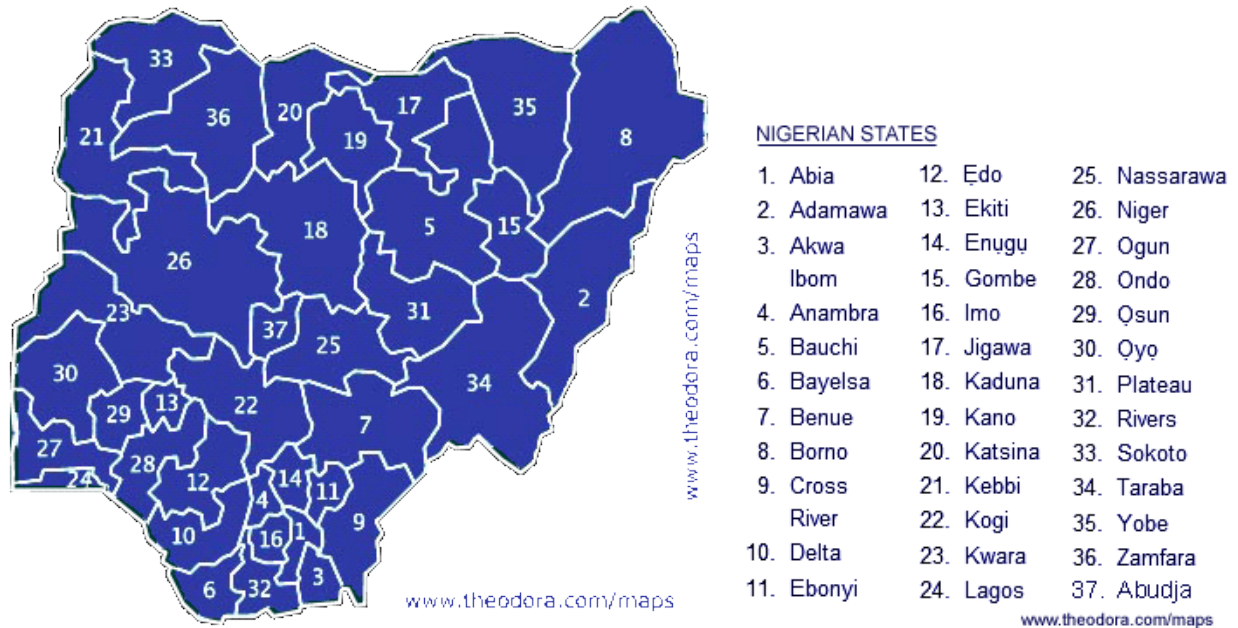


Political Map of Nigeria (source: [www.theodora.com](http://www.theodora.com)) retrieved 2/20/2012

### **Politics and Geography:**

To have a better understanding of Nigeria's educational evolution and framework, it is useful to look briefly at the history of Nigeria and the history of education and educational policy in Nigeria within the context of the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. Presently, Nigeria has a federal system of government similar to the United States of America. There is a central government head quartered in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria. Abuja is the Federal Capital Territory and not a state. It is administered similar to Washington, DC. There are thirty-six subnational governments called States.

Nigeria Map showing states: source [www.theodora.com](http://www.theodora.com) retrieved 02/20/2012



Abuja(#37) Federal Capital Territoty – Capital of Nigeria

States are then made up of administrative territories called Local Government Areas (LGA) which are similar to cities in the USA. Geographically, there are six geopolitical zones that the states fall into. These are; North Central, North East, North West, South East, South-South and South West.

Nigeria is a country in West Africa bounded by Benin to the west, Niger to the north, Chad to the northeast, Cameroon to the east and the Gulf of Guinea to the south. The country has four geographical regions from south to north. (a) A coastal belt of mangrove swamps running east to west. (b) Undulating plains and scattered hills in the north and covered in tropical rain forests to the south. (c) A central plateau with open woodland and savannah in the middle belt. (d) A semi-desert in the extreme north which empties into the Sahara desert. The principal rivers

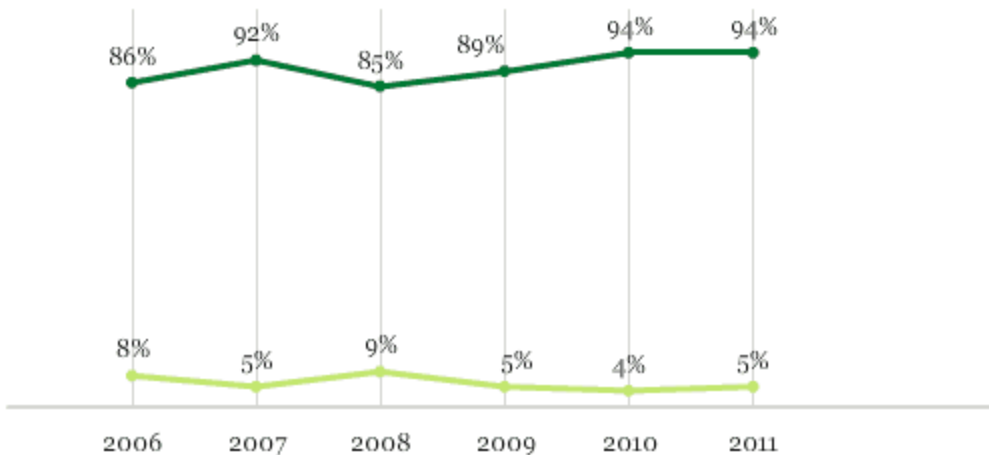
are the Niger and Benue that divides the country into three when they meet at a confluence in Lokoja and then flows out into the Delta region from which oil is produced.

The political and economic structures have been historically constructed, along ethnic, religious and regional lines since independence. There is a lack of true national unity on account of this. The last civil war was fought along ethnic lines mainly between the Igbo and a few close tribes that supported the secession from Nigeria in 1967 and the rest of the country. Attempts at national unity, post-civil war, are at best tenuous. Upward mobility and career promotions are most often executed along ethnic lines leading to a situation where ethnic or religious affiliation is more powerful than merit or qualification. Nepotism has come to be expected as a mechanism of institutional function. Political parties from the outset were organized along similar ethnic lines, a Northern party or a Southern party, a Hausa-Fulani Party or a Yoruba party or Igbo party. The consequence of such inbuilt regionalization is a resultant nepotism (often called tribalism). Bribery is often an expectation for any kind of official transaction as are kickbacks on contracts to officials who assigned them.

Corruption has been identified as the number one moral issue in the Nigerian society. This has negatively affected education and access to education. Here is a survey from Gallup.

*Is corruption widespread throughout the government in this country, or not?*

■ Yes, corruption is widespread    ■ No, corruption is not widespread



GALLUP®

Key: Top line is Yes and bottom line is No.

Gallup drew the following conclusions.

“The government's ongoing failure to address widespread poverty and stimulate job creation likely compounds Nigerians' frustration. Despite Nigeria's considerable oil wealth, basic infrastructure remains severely inadequate in most areas, restricting the potential for business development. Nigerians' likelihood to be satisfied with basic necessities such as roads and schools is no higher than average for countries in sub-Saharan Africa” (Crabtree, 2012).

Over the years, allocations to education in the federal budget fluctuated in relation to priority of those in power. The years of military rule significantly affected education as there was no significant investment in the infrastructures of education leading to a massive atrophy of

the education sector. Embezzlement of the paltry allocation to education by school administrators meant that education needs were not met as money did not trickle down to solve the problems for which such was allocated. For example, in 2005, the Minister of Education was caught in a bribery scandal as he attempted to payoff members of the House of Representatives to approve his education budget. In a televised address, the Nigerian President fired the Minister and several senior members of the Ministry of education:

...President Olusegun Obasanjo fired his education minister Tuesday, [March 22, 2005] accusing him of bribing lawmakers with almost \$400,000 to increase his yearly budget, and said the minister's accomplices included the Senate leader. Obasanjo made the allegations in a televised address Tuesday evening following newspaper reports that Education Minister Fabian Osuji had been arrested for bribery last week (AP, 2005).

Endemic corruption meant that key educational mechanics like scholarships and grants were not awarded to the best and the brightest but to the most politically or ethnically connected or to anyone willing to kick back a percentage of the scholarship or grant. This corruption within academia affected not only equality of access to all but also the ethical sanctity of the academic environment. This perhaps explains why some have referred to the situation as a crisis and a state of confusion (cf. Ayeni, 2000; Aluede, 2006).

### **Religion:**

Nigeria has two major religions, Christianity mainly in the South (40%) and Islam mainly in the North (40%) and the rest (20%) practice African traditional religions erroneously called animism or paganism by many 'scholars' who do not fully understand the practice. Religion has a great influence on several aspects of the local cultures and this includes their approaches to

education. By the 11<sup>th</sup> century Islam was already introduced to the North and from there it spread to other parts of the country. Christianity was introduced in 1884 by missionaries along the Atlantic coast.

Nigeria is a deeply religious society and Religion is taught in both primary and secondary schools - Christian Religious Studies for Christian students and Islamic Religious Studies for Moslems. The African traditional religion is not taught in schools perhaps because the other traditions see it as polytheistic and as *paganism* which supposedly competes with the monotheism of the Abrahamic faith traditions. This is significant because the African traditional religious heritage is still the unseen hand underlying most of the lived culture of Africans and this in spite of the wide spread conversion to and profession of Christianity and Islam. Most Africans still see the traditional religious heritage as the true path to the past to harness meaning for the present. Many are however caught in the dysfunction between these learned foreign religions and the way of the forefathers creating a dysfunction that is both personal and social.

The Chinese, Japanese and Koreans and Indians, have links to their past through the maintenance and elevation of their traditional religious heritage (Taoism, Confucianism, Shinto, Buddhism, Hinduism, and related traditions). They saw their system as valid and legitimate processes in the face of the imperialistic expansionism of Christianity and Islam into their land. They drew and continue to draw on their traditional heritage to find a centering in their perception of themselves and the development of their societies. In Africa, the reverse is the case as African centered religious traditions were roundly condemned as *paganism* missionaries. Rejecting the African way was often made a precondition to benefits like schools and hospitals brought by missionaries. The African is caught between the traditional religious heritage and its derivative set of values and systems and the Euro-centered Christian traditions or the Arab

centered traditions and value systems respectively. There is religious tension within African society between the old traditions of the African past and the recently adopted traditions brought by imperialist Christianity. There is a second layer of tension between the adopted Christianity and Islam which had earlier arrived Nigeria by the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

Presently (2011), religious tension between the mostly Islamic North and the mostly Christian South has exploded into a slow religious war. Thousands have died in the clashes centered around the city of Jos which geographically blends the Moslem North and the Christian South. In 2011, a radical Islamic terrorist group calling itself *Boko Haram* (Western education is evil) declared war with the Nigerian State. They introduced suicide bombing, a novelty, into the country to devastating effect. On Christmas Eve, 2011, as Catholics were coming out of church after Mass, a suicide bomber exploded a bomb killing himself and scores of Christians including women and children. They have bombed the National Police Headquarters in Abuja, the Capital of Nigeria. They have also bombed a United Nations building in Abuja also killing scores. There have been counter attacks by Christians and the situation is growing from worse to worst as Nigerian law enforcement has not had this kind of religion driven violence before nor the training and resources to actively fight it. This religion derived violence has led to the interruption and often, closure of schools at all levels and has also led to parents of non-northern students pulling their children from Northern schools for their safety.

### **Oil Violence in the Niger Delta:**

In the Niger Delta, there is another war going on. This one is driven by the injustices of over fifty years of oil exploration and exploitation that has caused massive environmental disasters on the Niger Delta environment. The results are permanent ecological damage due to



un-cleaned oil spills that have affected fishing and farming, the traditional occupations of the natives. Some localities have oil spills going back to the 1970s. When the Niger Deltans organized and peacefully protested, their leaders were rounded up and many hanged by the past military dictator, General Sani Abacha in 1995.

Through a collusion between elements within the Nigeria government and multinational corporations, the Niger Deltans (the owners of the land from which the Nigerian state takes the oil that runs the country) have been left without noticeable development or recompense for their oil or their land. This has been a historically provocative act. The Deltans reorganized and militarized with combat weapons and launched attacks on oil platforms, kidnapping foreign expatriates for ransom and blowing up oil installations causing environmental pollution. With their meritorious agitation for equity not addressed, they declared war on the Nigerian state and the clash launched the most violence the nation has seen since the civil war in 1967-70. A ceasefire and demilitarization brought temporary reprieve but the situation is still simmering as the injustices of the oil multinationals in full collaboration with respective Nigerian governments is yet to satisfy the just demands of the Niger Deltans who supply Nigeria's wealth through oil.

The resulting violence has directly and indirectly affected education and schooling in the affected areas. Young people dropped out and joined the *Rebels* and others stayed home for their safety and still others became refugees becoming internally displaced persons. It is safe to say that the country cannot move forward and develop peacefully unless it fixes its socio-moral structures to rebuild faith in the institutions of society.

## **Historical Foundations of Nigerian Education**

Three phases or periods mark or situate an analysis of African education. These periods are; the pre-colonial, colonial and the post-colonial or the period beginning with independence. An understanding of the implications of the pre-colonial, colonial and the post-colonial periods and their effect on the current framework of education in Nigeria is a key area of enquiry for this study.

In order to build capacities and formulate policies and strategies so that education fully contributes to sustainable development in Africa, it is imperative to study and understand where Africans come from and what they come with as they engage in education. The colonial and post-colonial periods “are well studied by outsiders, as well as by African scholars of education policies and processes” (Jagusah 2001). However, the pre-colonial period has not enjoyed the same level of academic enquiry nor attention. Jagusah (2001) believes this period is generally ignored on account of a lack of interest by European scholars with ambiguous sentiments who appear to see no need for such study.

Molefi Asante in his location theory opines that research that is African centered by Africans will produce different outcomes from research that is European centered as the latter may see Africans as a problem to be solved or as objects (Asante, 1994). For Asante, “...a writer who calls Africans ....[a] pejorative term demonstrates that the writer ...[is] caught within the confines of European imperial culture and philosophy” (Asante and Mazama, 2005). Asante presents afrocentricity as seeking “to re-locate the African person as an agent in human history in an effort to eliminate the illusion of the fringes. For the past five hundred years Africans have been taken off of cultural, economic, religious, political, and social terms and have existed primarily on the periphery of Europe” (Asante, ). Asante concludes that location theory affects

educational achievement. African scholars who have accepted European theories and ideologies on education find it uncomfortable to research this early period (pre-colonial) perhaps because of their individual ambiguities in regards to education theory and policy. This leads to a vacuum of scholarly information as a resource for educational policy (Kane, 1963 in Jagusah, 2001).

Jagusah elaborates further; “African educational policies are therefore carried out in a cultural and educational policy and developmental vacuum in terms of African peoples’ everyday lives” (Jagusah, 2001). Nonetheless, culture, education and development are inextricably interwoven especially in the African and Nigerian contexts.

### **Cultural Education and Development in Africa:**

Man is a creature that by nature desires to know as this is what sets man apart from animals. Knowing or learning is generally culturally contextualized. Culture is therefore relevant to education. Modern conceptions of education are a challenge to past conceptions as there is increased acceptance and awareness that cultural practices impact educational achievement. Today such relevance and acknowledgement is necessary in the particular African context on account of Africa’s deep cultural roots and the difficulty of abandoning those roots in spite of Western education. Okere (2005) sums it up this way:

Philosophy is nothing more than first, the assumption and then the questioning and critical interpretation of one’s culture at the level of ultimacy and finality of being. Or, put in a different way, it is trying to find answers to the deep questions of meaning and existence posed by and within one’s environing culture. And if some people can do it for and from their culture as did Plato and Aristotle for Greek culture or Augustine and Aquinas for Medieval Christianity or Kant and Hegel for Enlightenment Europe, so should others be able to do same for African or other cultures.

Interest in what inhabitants of different lands do is as ancient as the written word (Boas 1940). However, interests in what Africans do and how they lived became a justification of the white man's claim of his divine right to civilize others (Hochschild, 1998). Reports on Africa supported the worldview of a Euro-centered universe rendering African culture irrelevant or nonexistent and variably legitimizing European conquest and exploitation.

Boas (1940) records that Herodotus chronicled to the Greeks what he had seen in various lands. Caesar and Tacitus reported on the customary practices of the Gauls and Germans. Marco Polo and Ibn Batuta reported on the strange inhabitants of the Far East and Africa through the middle ages. In time, Cook's journey brought great excitement and interest to his readers. On account of these reports, an interest grew on getting to know more about the lives of people outside of Europe. According to Boaz (1940); Rousseau, Schiller and Herder in the eighteenth century attempted to build a compendium on the history of mankind out of the reports of travelers. Boas points to the works of Klemm and Waitz, written in the nineteenth century were more comprehensive in this regard and in time, Linnaeus, Blumenbach, and Camper, stand out as biologists who attempted to understand the varieties of human forms. When Darwin, Huxley and Hegel exploded on the scene, Boas concludes that the concern of enquiry was centered on man's origin and his place in the animal universe.

The development of psychology brought about a greater awareness to the problems brought on by the diversity of race and social groups. In an attempt to justify slavery, pseudo-scholars attempted a study of mental characteristics of races. This led to social Darwinism in which higher societies colonized lower or weaker societies just as higher animals fed on lower or weaker animals. The ultimate social Darwinist was Adolf Hitler. "Finally sociology, economics,

political science, history and philosophy have found it worthwhile to study conditions found among alien peoples in order to throw more light upon modern social processes” (Boaz, 1940).

All the above historical enquiry and more to come in the passage of time have been aimed to attempt an understanding of the steps by which man has come to be what he is, seen biologically, psychologically and culturally. Therefore a study of African education and policy devoid of the historical hindsight situated within the specific African context is lacking in its comprehensiveness and results in producing frameworks and systems that are syncretic and lacking in wholeness and sustainability (Sifuna, 2000).

Africans as beneficiaries of colonial education did not contribute themselves to the foundational framework and philosophy of their education. The education they received therefore lacked the cultural contextualization necessary to make their education enlightening and yet culturally personal. As noted by Jagusah (2001), Neo Marxist and Marxist educational scholars acknowledge the relevance of culture in the educational process (Apple, 1982, 1996; Freire, 1998; Grourix, 1991). Ravitch, (1991) and Schesinger, (1992) who can be categorized as conservative, capitalist and colonial oriented writers also acknowledge the relevance of education to culture (in Jagusah, 2001).

The conclusion on the relationship between education and culture can also be made about culture and development. It appears in contradistinction to what was attainable in Europe, Makgoba (1970) says that when it comes to Africa, “the role of culture and its relationship to educational attainment as well as to socio-political and economic development, is readily and more easily dismissed” (Jagusah, 2001). Such dismissal is a reality that Wilson (1993) explains as being probably anchored in a deeply ingrained self-doubt in the African psyche. Woodson

(1933/1999) affirms a similar self-doubt in African Americans with implications for the place in the larger American society. An analysis of this self-doubt among African Americans and how it has affected their subcultural experience in America in terms of their development and evolution in America is outside the immediate scope of this work (See Woodson, C. (1933/1999) *The mis-education of the Negro*).

For the sake of African educators and the future of education in Africa and how such affect the development of the continent in a fast paced 21<sup>st</sup> century society; there is an analytical need to explain the obvious absence of an African centered educational process for educating Africans. In *Other people's children: cultural conflict in the classroom*, Delpit (1995), notes that society has a responsibility to educate the children of the next generation without inflicting cultural damage on them (Jagusah, 2001). Therefore a colonial African educational framework that lacked the rootedness of the African culture and the narrative of its people could be said to have done cultural damage to Africa's children. It is important now to delineate the terms: culture, education and development and define them as part of our analysis.

### **Culture As a life Map**

It is difficult to construct a single definition of culture as there are a variety of takes on it. The pioneering English Anthropologist Edward B. Tylor, in an 1871 book titled, *Primitive Culture*, defined culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." Since Tylor, the meaning of culture has grown and developed to include the full range of learned human behavior. "Cultural artifacts" are nothing but byproducts of culture but not culture itself. In general acceptance is the following; that culture is "'...a system of norms and control', as 'a map' (Pai & Alder, 1997:23) that gives a group a sense of direction" Jagusah (2001). Culture is

complex and multilayered in understanding and its full treatment lies outside the purview of this paper. However the treatment here is to underscore its relevance to education in general and show how the absence of the African culture in developing and creating African education and educational policy has affected African education and those educated under that system and framework.

Jagusah's treatment of the word 'culture' presents it as having gone through considerable modification. Greek worldview divided the world into the *cultured* and the *barbarians*. Greek high society of male aristocrats (excluding the servant class, women and slaves) were considered cultured and of course non-Greeks were the *barbarians*. Enlightenment Europe likewise saw the world as divided into the *civilized* and the *primitive or savage*. European society was civilized and non-Europeans were *primitive or savage* (Eze, 1997) and "...the non-Greeks, incapable of culture and lacking the superior rational capacity [the ability to justify one's behavior, preferences and mores] for the Athenian-style democratic social organizations lived brutishly and under despotism" (Eze, 1997:4). European Enlightenment accepted and assumed Greek rational ideals. Explaining Eze (1997) further, Jagusah (2001), states that the Enlightenment accepted:

...reason's categorical function of discriminating between the cultured (now called the 'civilized') and the 'barbarians' (the savage or the primitive). It can be argued, in fact, that the enlightenment's declaration of itself as the 'Age of Reason' was predicated upon the assumption that reason [the ability to justify one's behavior, preferences and mores or to more simply put, the ability to follow a rule] could only come to maturity in modern Europe, while the inhabitants of areas outside of Europe,

who were considered to be of non-European racial and cultural origins, were consistently described as rationally inferior and savage...

Jagusah further notes that Eze's take on the question of source authority for the period's cultural and philosophical anthropology stands out among other ideas. He questions where the Greek and Enlightenment thinkers secure the source for such "categorical presuppositions." Eze (1997) says that Hume (1711-1776), Kant (1724-1804), and Hegel (1770-1832) blindly quoted each other's fables over and over, so that they became facts (Jagusah, 2001). Mudibe (1988) would call this "epistemological ethnocentrism" (Jagusah, 2001).

The conclusion here is that these three thinkers of the Enlightenment (Hume, Kant, Hegel) could have overcome their epistemological ethnocentrism had they wanted to but "[t]he ideology of justified belief of the Enlightenment period superseded their so-called search for the truth.... When source authority and interpretative authority conflict, the danger of ideological universalization is easily realized" (Jagusah, 2001).

Dependent on the Eurocentric framework on history and epistemology, colonial missionaries and educators, brought their bias into their construct of education for Africans. They also affirmed the validity of their methodology by claiming the authority of their Christian God who had sent them to bring God's revelation to the heathens (Africans). African graduates of this educational system have continued to pass on this European version of episteme or what constitutes knowledge to younger generation. In the process, they have stymied as it were, the growth and development and most importantly, the equal respect for local gnosis or knowledge. African local knowledge is at the heart of African epistemology (Okere, 2005).



It is assumed in modern scholarship, that everyone has culture (Gollnick and Chin 1988, Goodenough, 1987, in Jagusah, 2001) as opposed to earlier concepts that centered culture only in Europe. The European concept of culture and therefore civilization was prejudicial and ethnocentric. However, those prejudicial and ethnocentric ideologies became the underpinnings for African educational policies under colonialism and were also assumed even by well-meaning missionaries and teachers and colonial administrators as they participated in the expansion of colonies in Africa (Sifuna, 2000).

Culture is broadly defined today. Anthropologists now define culture as "...a way of perceiving, believing, evaluating, and behaving (Gollnick and Chin, 1988 in Jagusah, 2001)." Following are examples of human cultural traits that are deemed universal, (Moua, 2012).

1. communicating with a verbal language consisting of a limited set of sounds and grammatical rules for constructing sentences
2. using age and gender to classify people (e.g., teenager, senior citizen, woman, man)
3. classifying people based on marriage and descent relationships and having kinship terms to refer to them (e.g., wife, mother, uncle, cousin)
4. raising children in some sort of family setting
5. having a sexual division of labor (e.g., men's work versus women's work)
6. having a concept of privacy
7. having rules to regulate sexual behavior
8. distinguishing between good and bad behavior
9. having some sort of body ornamentation
10. making jokes and playing games
11. having art
12. having some sort of leadership roles for the implementation of community decisions

While all cultures have these and possibly many other universal traits, different cultures have developed their own specific ways of carrying out or expressing them.

Assuming therefore the examples of universal cultural traits given above, one can then conclude that Africa has always had culture in spite of different conclusions by outsiders (Asante 1994). This conclusion opens up the question as to what kind of cultural subtext has grounded African educational policies and practices if the foundation was built using non-African sources for the cultural foundation of African education because culture affects education. In Africa, “there are fundamental distortions embedded in ... African educational thought, policies, theories and practices about educating ourselves and our children. These distortions thwart the very intentions of what should constitute education – content, processes and results” (Jagusah, 2001).

As education helps to determine one’s knowledge of self, then colonial African education with a non-African cultural foundation could not have helped to educate Africans to acquire knowledge of self. It is a difficult conclusion to draw to the contrary. This perhaps explains why it produces a kind of educational and cultural dissonance.

### **The Nature of Education**

Different thinkers have different definitions for education. Some define it as getting the educated ready or a preparation for life, be this formal education or informal education (Counts, 1932, 1962). Others do not see it as a preparation for life but as itself life or life itself (Dewey 1916, 1938, 1939). Education in its etymology has two Latin words that provide further meaning: *educere* and *educare*. These two words also imply two schools of philosophical thought viz; the pragmatic or realistic and the idealistic schools. *Educere*, means *to lead out*.

Those of this school of thought include idealists like Plato. The *discipulus* or disciple or learner already has innate ideas that need to be stretched or expanded. Socrates' description of himself as a philosophical midwife follows this school of thought. Socrates saw his role as helping people who were pregnant with knowledge to give birth to knowledge latent within them. *Educare*, on the other hand means *to form*. The mind of the learner in this school of thought operates like a *tabula rasa* – a *blank slate*. The child at birth has nothing on his mind but a blank slate and, as he grows, sensations from his environment make impressions on the slate, feeding it with knowledge.

The end of education according to Aristotle is the attainment of *summum bonum* – the highest good – it provides a perfection of the good life. The good life is lived within a context as it were. So the educational processes, formal and informal, like culture, involve strategies that enculturate and socialize the population to the good life. For Jagusah (2001), the educational system seeks to prepare persons for the evolution to mature roles and responsibilities within society. Referencing Strouse (2000) and Spring (1997); Jagusah (2001) further points out that at the heart of education or the educational process is the issue of whether it should just be about the transmission of culture and if so then there is the related issue of whose culture is to be transmitted. In the African context the question is whether it should be about the cultural transformation as pioneered in Nigeria and South Africa (Soyinka, 1996, Makgoba, 1997 in Jagusah 2001) or Euro-centered.

### **Multicultural Education:**

Europeans, who brought Western style education to Africa, proceeded to educate Africans based on the Eurocentric framework. The educational approach was not multicultural in

nature but unicultural. Gay (1994) presents a variety of definitions and articulations of what multicultural education looks like:

- Institutionalizing a philosophy of cultural pluralism within the educational system that is grounded in principles of equality, mutual respect, acceptance and understanding, and moral commitment to social justice (Baptiste, 1979)
- Structuring educational priorities, commitments, and processes to reflect the cultural pluralism of the United States and to ensure the survival of group heritages that make up society, following American democratic ideals (AACTE, 1973; Hunter, 1974)
- An education free of inherited biases, with freedom to explore other perspectives and cultures, inspired by the goal of making children sensitive to the plurality of the ways of life, different modes of analyzing experiences and ideas, and ways of looking at history found throughout the world (Parekh, 1986, pp. 2627)
- A humanistic concept based on the strength of diversity, human rights, social justice, and alternative lifestyles for all people, it is necessary for a quality education and includes all efforts to make the full range of cultures available to students; it views a culturally pluralistic society as a positive force and welcomes differences as vehicles for better understanding the global society (ASCD Multicultural Education Commission, in Grant, 1977b, p. 3)
- An approach to teaching and learning based upon democratic values that foster cultural pluralism; in its most comprehensive form, it is a commitment to achieving educational equality, developing curricula that builds understanding about ethnic groups, and combatting oppressive practices (Bennett, 1990)
- A type of education that is concerned with various groups in American society that are victims of discrimination and assaults because of their unique cultural characteristics (ethnic, racial, linguistic, gender, etc.); it includes studying such key concepts as prejudice, identity, conflicts, and alienation, and modifying school practices and policies to reflect an appreciation for ethnic diversity in the United States (Banks, 1977)
- Acquiring knowledge about various groups and organizations that oppose oppression and exploitation by studying the artifacts and ideas that emanate from their efforts (Sizemore, 1981)
- Policies and practices that show respect for cultural diversity through educational philosophy, staffing composition and hierarchy, instructional materials, curricula, and evaluation procedures (Frazier, 1977; Grant, 1977)
- Comprehensive school reform and basic education for all students that challenges all forms of discrimination, permeates instruction and interpersonal relations in the classroom, and advances the democratic principles of social justice (Nieto, 1992)

### **The Period of Pre-colonial Education**

The trust of colonial education does not appear to have acknowledged the existence of any organized education or educational framework before Africa's contact with colonial Europe

(Okere, 2005). An African educational did not acknowledge this (Jagusah, 2001). In his 1999 book on western education and the socio-political domination of Africa, Bassey submits that present day socio-cultural discourse in regards to African education focuses more on “theorizing on traditional Eurocentric functional, conflictual, and associative or assimilationist platforms without engaging with the first phase of African education” (in Jagusah 2001). Entrenched colonial and neocolonial scholarship blocks an affirmative and meaningful discussion or treatment of Africa’s education past by attacking researchers or scholars who try. According to Ngugi wa Thiong’o;

... imperialism is still the root cause of many problems in Africa. Unfortunately some African intellectuals have fallen victims — a few incurably so — to that scheme and they are unable to see the divide-and-rule colonial origins of explaining any differences of intellectual outlook or any political clashes in terms of the ethnic origins of the actors. No man or woman can choose their biological nationality.

There appears to be a bias favoring a Eurocentric framework as a tool in educational analysis and reference (Mudimbe 1998, Spreen 2001 in Jagusah 2001). Jagusah refers to this as pseudo-scholarship that attempts to invalidate other systems outside of the Eurocentric. According to him, such resistance to a different approach scares away scholars who would otherwise pursue their craft in a non- judgmental academic platform and perhaps contribute to improving education. The fields of African literature and African Philosophy have already produced renowned thinkers and writers like Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Theophilus Okere, V. Y. Mudimbe and others. Here is how Ngugi wa Thiong’o, the renowned Kenyan literalist, who abandoned English as a language of written literature and,

began writing in Gikuyu his Kenyan language, sees it as presented in his book on decolonizing the mind as found in Shakur (2012).

Imperialism is total: it has economic, political, military, cultural and psychological consequences for the people of the world today. It could even lead to holocaust.

[A]ny achievement in spoken or written English was highly rewarded. [In the colonial education system, which advanced by qualifying exams,] nobody could pass the exam who failed the English language paper no matter how brilliantly he had done in the other subjects. [. . .] English was the official vehicle and the magic formula to colonial elitism.

[. . .]I started writing in Gikuyu language in 1977 after seventeen years of involvement in Afro-European literature, in my case Afro-English literature. [. . .] I believe that my writing in Gikuyu language, a Kenyan language, an African language, is part and parcel of the anti-imperialist struggles of Kenyan and African peoples. In schools and universities our Kenyan languages - that is the languages of the many nationalities which make up Kenya - were associated with negative qualities of backwardness, underdevelopment, humiliation and punishment. We who went through that school system were meant to graduate with a hatred of the people and the culture and [instead with] the values of the language of our daily humiliation and punishment. I do not want to see Kenyan children growing up in that imperialist-imposed tradition of contempt for the tools of communication developed by their communities and their history. I want them to transcend colonial alienation.

[. . .] But writing in our languages per se [. . .] will not itself bring about the renaissance in African cultures if that literature does not carry the content of our people's

anti-imperialist struggles to liberate their productive forces from foreign control; the content of the need for unity among the workers and peasants of all the nationalities in their struggle to control the wealth they produce and to free it from internal and external parasites.

However, this attitude or approach neither is yet to translate into educational policy nor is it systematically taught in the classroom and herein lays the heart of the dissonance in the educated African. He is torn between the European standard of education and the accompanying value set and the African standard and value set. Having moved away from the rootedness of his African center, he is on the periphery of the European center resulting in an existential dilemma. He is neither fully one nor the other. This dilemma has turned into a continuing struggle that affect African policy makers and implementers of the made educational policies into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **A Sampling of African Traditional Systems of Learning in Nigeria**

Writing about traditional education in Cameroon before the arrival of colonialism, Ayafor (2001) gives this opinion:

Chinua Achebe has frequently insisted that ‘culture’ did not arrive in Africa with the white man and the same is certainly true of education (Todd, 1983:123)....Through myths and folktales, they [boys/girls] learnt the religion and philosophy of their people; legends were relieved in songs and dances; and traditions were reinforced by means of instruction and demonstration. Such education was ideally suited to the traditional life of the people. Thus, national linguistic resources were at their utmost functional status and level (Ayafor, 2001).

Traditional education was based on the region of the country and what was necessary to become learned to enable a higher chance of survival within the environment. Accordingly, people from the riverine areas apprenticed either within their family or with outsiders on boat making and fishing while those growing up in agricultural areas learned the agricultural skills of the area. Among the Annang of Southeastern Nigeria men and women learned traditional trade as culturally associated with their sexes.

### **Sex/Role based education**

Men for example, learned professional rope climbing especially of the palm trees including the tapping of the raffia palm tree for wine. The two main palm trees are the raffia palm and the oil palm. The oil palm produces oil among other uses and the raffia palm produces wine among other uses. The raffia palm takes skill in tapping, to tease the wine out from the palm for drinking. It is also a dangerous task as falls are common if errors are made in climbing or saddling the raffia palm for tapping. Therefore the apprentice needed to understudy the master for a significant period. Mastering this art of wine tapping sufficed for the education necessary for survival among the Annang as they traditionally have many palm trees and the market is there for palm wine. Annang women on the other hand learned artistic skills like basket weaving and pottery and mostly farming of the staples eaten in the area: cassava, sweet yams, vegetables, etc. Yellow or White yams were generally farmed by men. Mostly, a girl's education had more to do with home economics and child rearing and how to be a good wife. Very few women had professional jobs outside the home except farming through the subsistence system whereby families planted and then lived off the farm.



### **Guilds – the professions and apprenticeship**

Stonework and crafts were taught through an apprenticeship arrangement as there were no formal schools. Young people interested in a particular craft generally with the help of family selected a master craftsman as a teacher and guide. The common practice was that the apprentice lived with the master as a part of the family while learning his craft. He contributed through labor. Sometimes there is a fee paid by the apprentice at the beginning and at the completion of the apprenticeship. In this way, traditional education passed on the collective traditions to subsequent generations of artisans through the apprenticeship method.

### **Agricultural education**

In an agrarian culture, food comes from the land. Food has to be cultivated and grown, therefore, agro education is a way of life. Farming traditionally follows the seasons. Families oriented their children to the skills necessary for survival. Contingent on the environment and the climate, particular kinds of food crops are grown. The skills to succeed in farming are passed along through the informal education within the family and the local community.

### **Traditional Medicine**

Each village or area had a set of medicine men and women who provided for the health needs of the area. These medicine men were versed in natural medicine from herbs to roots as passed on over the generations. Some villages or regions specialized in certain aspects of medical practice. For instance, the Village of *Abiakpo* Ntak Inyang in Ikot Ekpene of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, specialized in bone setting. In the Annang language spoken in the area, *Abia okpo* translates as

*bone doctor*. Often the medicine men doubled as priests and priestesses of the native religion and combined physical with spiritual healing. They are also master herbalists whose mastery allow them to find cures amongst the woods of their environment using knowledge passed down through millennia. In modern times, with a massive conversion to Christianity, there are now specialized Christian spiritual healing homes and churches consulting the Christian God through divine *revelation* and doing about the same work as the medicine men: healing.

### **The Colonial Period of African Education:**

The Berlin Conference of 1885 was a high water mark in Europe's direct involvement in Africa and in African affairs at all levels and this took different forms. Education was of very low concern in comparison, for example, to the British exploitation of raw materials for use in Britain and Europe. The American Journal of International Law in 1921 published the documents of that conference. Here is part of the preface to an updated agreement as signed in 1919:

Whereas the General Act of the African Conference signed at Berlin on February 26, 1885, was primarily intended to demonstrate the agreement of the Powers with regard to the general principles which should guide their commercial and civilising action in the little-known or inadequately organised regions of a continent where slavery and the slave trade still flourished...

Evidence of the civilizing action was, hard to find in Africa (Williams, 1890). Adam Hochschild, in his 1998 book; *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*, presents an indicting account of the genocide in colonial Congo at the behest of King Leopold II of Belgium with the Belgians as beneficiaries of the wealth from the genocide. In the same book, he chronicles the concerted effort by the King and his collaborators to morally justify

the genocide and to insist on the civilizing benefits of his campaign of terror. However, there are contradictory period accounts that affirm Hochschild's indictment. George Washington Williams was a Black American soldier, minister, politician and historian who had travelled to King Leopold II's Congo Free State shortly before his death. In his open letter to Leopold about the suffering of the region's inhabitants at the hands of Leopold's agents, he helped to sway European and American public opinion against the regime running the Congo, under which some 10 million people lost their lives. In George Washington Williams's Open Letter to King Leopold on the Congo, in 1890 he contradicts Leopold's version of events - humane civilization and Christianization of the natives. According to Hochschild, (1998);

[William]... condemned the brutal and inhuman treatment the Congolese were suffering at the hands of the colonizers. He mentioned the role played by Henry M. Stanley, sent to the Congo by the King, in tricking and mistreating the Africans. Williams reminded the King that the crimes committed were all committed in his name, making him as guilty as the actual culprits. He appealed to the international community of the day to "call and create an International Commission to investigate the charges herein preferred in the name of Humanity ...

King Leopold did not face any significant consequences for this African genocide carried out in his name and in the name of Belgium.

### **The Scramble for Africa:**

The Berlin conference (1884-1885) did not give priority to the education of the natives but the takeover of the entire continent to be divided amongst the European powers for economic and socio-political purposes (The American Journal of International Law, 1921). The effects of

that scramble for Africa remain today and may continue for a very long time. Groups of homogeneous people or tribes were split up into several countries without regard to cultural boundaries or traditional ways of life and practices. In the 1984 book, *Partitioned Africans: Ethnic Relations Across Africa's International Boundaries* (1884-1984), Saadia Taouval points out conflicts that arose in the nascent countries of Africa that echo the effects of the scramble: "The Congo (now Zaire) [and now the Democratic Republic of the Congo] saw strong secessionist sentiment among the Bagongo in 1950....in 1960, it had to contend with Katanga's attempt to secede....In Ghana, the Ewe claimed the right to secede and join their brethren in Togo." The list of forcefully joined groups seeking separation in Africa is long. Eritrea finally broke off from Ethiopia and recently Southern Sudan finally broke off from Sudan. Millions died in the process of attempting to correct the fateful decisions of creating artificial boundaries to service European needs during the scramble for Africa.

In Nigeria, education was primarily the domain of the missionaries who were given a free hand by the British colonial government. The same could be said of other African colonies except perhaps in the case of South Africa where the "missionaries" had no intention of leaving as they helped to shape a theological justification of South African Apartheid fostering as it were an economic-political-religious collaboration for profit. The consequences of such holistic institutional collaborations still have lasting effects on Africa today (Wa Thiongo'o, 1986).

According to some writers, the missionary approach to education, sought to completely destroy the African cosmological ideology or worldview, producing Africans trained to adopt the value structure of Englishmen or Europeans (Chanaiwa, 1980 in Jagusah 2001). Referencing Tabata, (1960), Jagusah refers to the education of the Nigerian as barbarism in that it "targeted self-hatred and self-destruction as desirable qualities". African introspective thinkers and writers

in the African diaspora, agree with this assessment (see Fanon, 1965a, 1965b, 1967a, 1967b, Wa Thiong'o 1986, Asante 1994, Okere 2005).

The African consequentially suffers from three forms of ambiguity: the ambiguity of state, the ambiguity of nationalism and the ambiguity of class and class consciousness (Marks, 1986 in Jagusah, 2001). There is a consequential beclouding of the post independent African elites' educational policy, most evidently seen in relation to the contextualization of education in African cultures. Little research attention is given by African scholars in their theories about "pre-colonial educative processes" on issues of education, in terms of policies and planning in Africa (Stagnage, 1987 in Jagusah, 2001).

As Africans, especially the educated elites accept as whole, a Jasperian theory of African history and life, including education – namely that African culture and existential framework do not stand a chance in the clash with European civilization and that its past is doomed, then the next generation is miseducated as to the true African heritage (Asmal & James, 2001; Jahn, 1989/1990 in Jagusah, 2001).

Most theories on African self-determination have tended to conclude that the African is in a vicious circle of deficits in education and development (Wa Thiong'o, 1986, Okere, 2005). As Africa continues to emerge from the clutches of the colonial structures and infrastructures they inherited at independence, and post-colonial economic dependence on their past colonialists, there remains the issue of whether they have the necessary capacity to become self-determining. African education and development theorists and policy makers, point to Africa past as the seat of what will take Africa to the future (Asante, 1994). "If any development is not rooted in a specific cultural, ideological, philosophical or metaphysical ethos, its educational

processes and outcomes are open to question” (Jagusah, 2001). If the African past is not affirmed but dismissed and despised, then the African future is in jeopardy as lessons learned cannot be passed forward to newer generations. African development should not only be a starting point of the future but also a continuum and this can only come from taking seriously the African heritage and not a caricature of same.

Africa has problems with progress, namely; the lack of authentic context, cultural context. For Jagusah (2001), progress in Africa seems to be “context proof” be this economic, spiritual, intellectual, social, political or cultural. In the United States, children are oriented towards the so-called American dream, as often articulated by politicians in their campaign speeches. The implication of the dream is that if you work hard enough, you will succeed, and everyone who works hard enough ought to succeed. Americans grow up embracing and imbibing the nuances of this culture of progress and dream of success in a free capitalist democracy. In Africa however, it appears the reverse is the case. Instead of embracing their *Africanness* as a sophisticated and ancient way of life, the inherited and imbibed educational framework and reference expectation, has taught self-loathing as a pathway to becoming Europeanized and therefore “good enough” (Jagusah, 2001). Development in Africa is generally cast in deficit terms; what the African is not and should become, instead of what the African is or wishes to become. This creates a deficit educational orientation for successive African generations.

Education in practice seeks to produce cultural transmission or cultural transformation. If however the framework used to transmit the education is itself based on an artificial or in some instances a colonial or racist agenda (like in Apartheid South Africa or in King Leopold’s Congo) then the final product is the *half educated African* who lacks the human capacity to truly change or transform himself or his environment . This kind of *educated African* “...had

sufficient knowledge to lead his people from their educational traditions but did not know where to take them” (MacMichael, 1934 in Collins et. al. (eds.) (1994) in Jagusah, 2001). The interplay of culture and education (-especially as such apply in the case of Nigeria and South Africa, corresponding to the first phase of African education – pre-colonial (Gutek, 1993; Makgoba, 1997)) and then education policy is an area that needs deeper research enquiry (Jagusah, 2001).

Only such embedding of educational policy and practice in the culture can produce effective educated persons who can help themselves and their society. The absence of a “transformative theorization” (Strouse, 2000 in Jagusah 2001) leads to a deficit educational orientation (Bassey, 1999 in Jagusah 2001) as the beneficiaries of such education are located in the periphery and not the centers of their society. As pointed out earlier, (Sifuna, 2000) the goal of colonial education was not to serve the African but the agenda of the colonist.

The embrace of missionary education by the British government in Nigeria was because it was in line with the colonizing enterprise and therefore ideologically practical and utilitarian. Sifuna, elaborating this idea further says, “...imparted skills such as reading, writing and arithmetic as well as values included loyalty to the existing order [the colonial enterprise] and disciplined self-sacrifice in the interest of that order” (Sifuna, 2000). In their 1960 book on Buganda and British rule, 1900-1955, Low and Pratt (1960), capture this idea of *other serving education* and points out that Lord Lugard, first Governor General of Nigeria underscores this view in relation to the training of the sons of Fulani Chiefs.

I hope that they would thus be taught not merely to read and write, but to acquire an English Public Schoolboy’s ideas of honour, loyalty and above all responsibility. It is by such means that I hope the next generation of Fulani rulers may become really efficient,

reliable and honest cooperators with the British in the administration of the Protectorate (Sifuna, 2000).

The practice of *educating* the natives, only to the extent that they were useful to the colonizing enterprise, rendered their education controlled and limited. This was a common practice among the major colonial powers from Europe as European expansionism spread globally at the heart of the industrial revolution. The Blacks in South Africa had a similar experience.

Black Africans had to overcome the burden of Bantu education...rested on a racist anthropology designed to generate cheap labor for what remained a colonially organized economy. Colored and Indian students were also treated as presumptuously subordinate minorities. Though apartheid has been dismantled, its effects are still evident in a population that is desperately undereducated and, in many respects, miseducated (Asmal & James, in Jagusah, 2001).

Africans who have been products of this *undereducation* and *miseducation*, “suffer from a lack of centeredness” (Asante, 1987, 1994 in Jagusah 2001). Asante further notes that:

The primary view held by Afrocentrists is that the most rewarding results of any analysis of culture [must or should be] derived from a centered place position, usually defined as the place from which all concepts, ideas, purposes, and visions radiate. Determining place, therefore, becomes one of the central tasks of the Africological scholar. Marginal positions or marginalized theorists [theories] of aesthetics are consequently called into severe question in regard to their efficacy (Asante, 1994).



### **Post-colonial Period and African centered Education:**

A key challenge to African education is the unavailability of sustainable and extensive resources to investigate the *how* of the processes; of how Africa and Africans locate themselves in the educative process. Most resources available for research are tied to external motives and goals that are not generally interested in this kind of research. Entities like the World Bank, the IMF, the Paris Club and other international lending cartels have re-established a neo-colonial economic hold on nations like Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia and other African countries who have taken their loans. In the analysis of Jagusah (2001), there are limited resources available for that kind of research that prioritizes indigenous knowledge as part and parcel of the learning and teaching process. Citing Jahn (1989/90), Jagusah (2001) observes that “Africans are assumed students all the time” in the sense that they have not gotten it yet so as to have a seat at the epistemological table of egalitarianism.

Ngugi wa Thiong’o (1986) writing on decolonizing the mind, agrees on the generalizations about Africa and the consequential non-individuation of African realities as is. If there is individuation at all, it is in terms of tribe A or B not getting along and fighting each other. According to him, “[e]ven literature is sometimes evaluated in terms of the ‘tribal’ origins of the authors or the ‘tribal’ origins and composition of the characters in a given novel or play” Wa Thiong’o (1986). He believes that “[t]his misleading stock interpretation of the African realities has been popularised by the western media which likes to deflect people from seeing that imperialism is still the root cause of many problems in Africa” (Wa Thiong’o, 1986). He affirms the continuing effect of the miseducation on present generations pointing out that “[u]nfortunately some African intellectuals have fallen victims — a few incurably so — to that scheme and they are unable to see the divide-and-rule colonial origins of explaining any

differences of intellectual outlook or any political clashes in terms of the ethnic origins of the actors”(Wa Thiog’o 1986). He believes that Africa needs a different approach. For him, African realities “...are affected by the great struggle between the two mutually opposed forces in Africa today: an imperialist tradition on one hand, and a resistance tradition on the other”(Wa Thiog’o 1986). The imperialist tradition is represented by the multinational corporations and financial entities with the collaboration of the African ruling class who use their power to oppress and abuse their people while waving the national flag. The resistance tradition is kept alive by the working people who actually create wealth through work but get to keep very little of it.

Asante’s treatment of African aesthetics (1994) presents a view that suggests that reasons for the difficulty in carrying out scholarly research that is critical to the African situation and struggle, (economic, political, social, educational, developmental, etc.) is on account of the dislocation of Africa and African aesthetics in the last five hundred years. This has consequently led to a misrepresentation of African aesthetics in Western societies in forms that are but a caricature, “discontinuous, corrupted and distorted” thereby forcing Africans and African scholarship to assert and relocate themselves under adverse conditions or circumstances (Asante, 1994).

African education has suffered the same reality as African aesthetics in terms of dislocation because of European interference of the last five hundred years as fully consummated at the Berlin Conference called by Germany to divide up the continent amongst European powers in 1884 through 1885 without consideration or consultation as to what Africans themselves wanted or desired (Asiwaju, 1984, Asante, 1994). The effects of the Berlin Conference on Africa, has continuing ramifications in the continuous struggle of the continent across board

including education. According to Wa Thiong'o (1986), "imperialism is not a slogan. It is real; it is palpable in content and form and in its methods and effects". For him therefore:

Imperialism is the rule of consolidated finance capital and since 1884 this monopolistic parasitic capital has affected and continues to affect the lives even of the peasants in the remotest corners of our countries. If you are in doubt, just count how many African countries have now been mortgaged to IMF — the new International Ministry of Finance as Julius Nyerere once called it. Who pays for the mortgage? Every single producer of real wealth (use-value) in the country so mortgaged, which means every single worker and peasant. Imperialism is total: it has economic, political, military, cultural and psychological consequences for the people of the world today.

In 2011, things continue to change and Africa is emerging slowly from overt socio-political and economic domination by Europe, however, reporting on Africa seems to remain the same in the Western media and general consciousness (Shah, 2010). According to Shah;

Despite decades of conflict, death and tragedy, coverage of issues in Africa has often been ignored, oversimplified, or excessively focused on limited aspects. Deeper analysis, background and context has often been lacking, so despite what seems like constant images of starving children in famines, news of billions in aid to Africa from generous donor countries, *the background context and analysis is often missing*. Whether aid makes the situation worse, or why there is famine and hunger in Africa when African nations are exporting crops to other parts of the world are rarely asked by the mainstream.

Perhaps deeper analysis could assist the process of the African validating his past in order to create an educational framework for the present that serves the true needs of Africa.

The Africa presented by the ethnologist is a legend in which we used to believe. The African tradition as it appears in the light of neo-African culture may also be a legend – but it is a legend in which African intelligence believes. And it is their perfect right to declare authentic, correct and true those components of their past which they believe to be so. In the same way a Christian, asked about the nature of Christianity, will point to the gospel teaching ‘Love thy neighbor’ and not to the Inquisition....For several centuries Africa has had to suffer under the conception of the African past formed by Europe. But the present and the future will be determined by the conception that African intelligence forms out of the African past (Jahn, 1989/90 in Jagusah 2001).

The analysis above by Jahn can be construed as purely post-modernist in terms of questioning the grand narratives as acceptable sources of meaning creation. Eze (1997) already pointed this out in his critique of Europeans quoting each other for validation in terms of their references to what was true of Africa. Eze refers to this as ‘intertextuality’ on Africa. A one-size-fits-all approach to African development and educational needs is based on European intertextuality and lacks the bottom up developmental framework that is relevant to the true context (Gutek, 1993 in Jagusah, 2001) but reflective of top down approaches like the Structural Adjustment Programs(SAP) and other similar programs of the World Bank or the IMF (Samoff, 1999 in Jagusah 2001).

Situating African education and development within an African intertextuality is the way to the future. Jahn calls this *neo-African culture*, and sees it as an unbroken extension and rightful successor of tradition from which comes confidence to chart a new beginning. According to Jagusah (2001), icons of African literature; Eze, Mudimbe, Asante, p’Bitek, Wa Thiog’o,

Achebe, Soyinka and others have made significant contributions in their writings but this is yet to be translated into an educational framework that informs African learning.

Each society decides for itself the educational system that fits its needs and hands over this system or formula to teachers to execute. In Nigeria, the formal entity responsible for this is the Federal Ministry of Education headed by the Minister of Education. The National Education Policy is the reference document for the implementation of the desired educational framework for Nigeria which ought to reflect the socio-cultural reality Nigeria. Generally, the framework is supposed to reflect the path to enculturate and socialize its citizens. There are different ways or methods to accomplishing this, contingent on the particular needs of the particular society. A Marxist/neo-Marxist approach is critical and constructivist and conflictual; seeking to get learners to come to grips with what Bowels (2001) and Strouse (2001) refer to as legitimization and reproduction of inequalities in society while in the process excising hidden curricula from schools and society (Apple, 1996; Giroux, 1999 in Jagusah 2001). A functional approach is best suited if the goal is to locate the learner in his or her place in society. A Progressive and interactionalist approach is suited in an environment that wants more socialization and not much transmission as the goal. However, according to Jagusah all three approaches can work in ameliorating the education dilemma.

Education policy and practice in Nigeria and South Africa for instance are based on the inherited colonial and Bantu education platforms seeking to implement cultural transmission of a particular class orientation without critical approaches (Marks, 1986; Bassey 1999 in Jagusah 2001). Colonists came to Africa to stay as in South Africa and Australia, while colonialists sought to implement the imperialist domination of Africa for European national interests. Cultural imperialism (Carnoy, 1974) and class transplantation (Gutek, 1993) underlie Bantu

education in South Africa and colonial education in Nigeria. Educators in these countries still see their role as that of gatekeepers of the inherited educational framework (processing out undesirables using meaningless and unnecessary examinations (Gutek, 1993)) that are often as colonial in practice and imperialist in nature as that left in place by the colonists and colonialists.

### **The Deculturalization Process:**

A critical element of Bantu and colonial education was the implementation of a process of deculturization as in the case of the Indians of North America (Spring, 1997 in Jagusah 2001). In this process, structures are put in place that systematically impoverish the native culture, rendering it undesirable. It also leads to self-hatred and making them feel that what is theirs is not worthy of respect or worthy of being learned but that which is other, or outside of themselves is (Asante, 1994). What is worthy includes the metaphysically, epistemologically, axiologically (ethics and aesthetics) other. This process of deculturalization included elements that bastardized the native while exalting the foreign or colonial.

In practice, students were asked or often given no alternative but to change their names, their codes of dress, religious beliefs, language of acceptable communication, etc. At the high school that this researcher attended in South Eastern Nigeria, speaking the native language of the student was a punishable offense by school law while speaking English or French or any other European language was praised and made desirable. This researcher studied French and Latin with English being the language of instruction but not his native language. The consequence is that his native language never had the chance to evolve and become sophisticated with new words and expressions as society has evolved and become sophisticated.

Writing on language choice and imperialism Bisong (1995) has this to say: “[t]he dominance of English has also resulted in the imposition of the Anglo-Saxon-Judæo-Christian culture that goes with it so that indigenous cultures have been undervalued and marginalized.” The native languages of South Eastern Nigeria like (Annang), Ibibio or Efik were not often taught as advanced curriculum subjects but were available as electives at the high school level. Even the table manners taught was that of the *English schoolboy* whereas the majority of the students will never make it to England to eat on an English dining table therefore needing the finesse of English dinning etiquette. The traditional way of the local dining etiquette was looked down on and not encouraged. In the traditional system, community sharing of the food is at the center, but within the educational system it was not given a critical treatment at all. The psycho-social message here seems clear in the minds of young impressionable teenagers – what was foreign and of the colonial heritage was better and desirable, but what was native and of their heritage except for art or entertainment was secondary and not as important.

It was in this same vein that missionaries and missionary teachers forced converts to use English or European *Christian* names for baptism and refused to baptize catechumens or infants whose parents refused to choose foreign names; whereas the local native names had deeper meaning and more essence and whereas the foreign Christian names meant little to the African. There are today, many educated Africans who do not allow their children to pick up the local native language, sending them to schools where a foreign language is the only language of communication allowed (Jagusah, 2001). The resultant consequence of this is that the children are cut off from their cultural heritage which is buried in the language of their forefathers. That cultural wealth and capital needed for context, personal and societal development is often sacrificed or lost. They grow up to imbibe a syncretic and foreign culture and value set and

become alienated from their culture while growing up in their culture. A paradigm shift is needed to reorder the priority of the African center as a step towards the future that places the needs of Africa at the center of African development and not at the periphery.

### **The Process of Acculturation:**

According to Pai & Alder (1997), acculturation is a process used in the Nigerian educational context which orientates Nigerian students to the desired value sets. Compared to time spent in the study of African centered subjects, an inordinate amount of learning time is spent acquiring European languages and 'knowledges' at the expense of critical learning relevant to the African in Africa. For example, the Soweto Massacre of South Africa in 1976, happened on account of the Dutch settlers forcing their limited language, Afrikaans, on the larger Black population as a means of suppression and control. The youths resisted. Students rebelled, riots broke out, and the South African Defense Force used deadly force on students in school uniforms and massacred them in cold blood for daring to reject the top down acculturation processes of the Apartheid system of colonialism. Writing in the June 28<sup>th</sup> edition of TIME Magazine, 1976, the then Prime Minister, John Vorster of South Africa, was quoted saying; "The whites of South Africa understand the mentality of the black man." Time Magazine went on to say however that:

The humiliations of everyday life for the 18 million blacks in white-ruled South Africa make a mockery of that boast. Some events make the very realities of repression stand out in particularly bold relief. One was Sharpeville: in 1960, police broke up a rioting mob of blacks in this Johannesburg suburb by firing pointblank into the crowd, killing 69 and wounding 186. Last week South Africa suffered a second Sharpeville. Its name was Soweto.



The relevant aspect of education, namely; that of enculturation (Pai & Alder 1997) will be abandoned to passing references in earlier literature on African education. However, this is the aspect of education needed by the African student, as this is what will allow African learners to critically connect the relevant dots of their past to their present education and therefore centered in their learning of ways to change their present circumstances in terms of the evolution of development in Africa. Makgoba (1996; 1997), opines that that which is critical and leads to reforming the present is easily dismissed or eliminated from the teaching and learning modality of African education. Sonny Abia, a doctor of engineering and professional engineer, says that as an engineering student, studying in Nigeria; his curriculum taught him engineering for Europe and the West; how to build houses meant for the cold weather of Europe, complete with fireplaces and chimneys and other applications. The knowledge on the intricacies of building houses fit for his contextual tropical Africa received only a passing mention in his engineering education in Nigeria. He further went on to say that, he was educated for the global market and not for the immediacy of his contextual market of Nigeria and Africa (personal communication October 2011). Jagusah (2001) agrees with Abia's assessment of being educated for export and says that African education is good for other communities except Africa and the educated African remains a stranger in his own community.

What Nigeria needed and continues to need is an education that is on a developmental and transformational trajectory (see Wa Thiong'o 1986; Bassey 1999; Makgoba, 1996). Such education must also be more than a transmission of facts and value set especially when such facts and value set continue to perpetuate a foreign ideology and cultural framework. Such education must also be centered in the contextual centeredness of the African learner and his environment

(Asante, 1994). Jagusah accepts the proposition that knowledge and in this instance, African knowledge, should be socially constructed (see Berger & Luckman in Jagusah 2001).

### **Use of African Languages for Instruction:**

In his 1986 book on decolonizing the African mind, Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o captures the priceless value of resurrecting African languages as a lingua for the instruction of African students. His argument is based on the point that African languages are ancient and carry within them the history and essence of the people. Also, on a practical level, not using these local languages prevents the languages from enjoying the evolution to the modern day as other major languages of the world do. In addition, it sends a subliminal message of inferiority to the speakers of this *second* language. There are many educated Africans who have lost their ability to express themselves efficiently and in depth in their native languages but do so with excellence say in English or French, languages of imperial colonialism.

In the United States, for instance, there is ongoing *English only* fight as use of Spanish has expanded (with an increasing Spanish speaking population) for fear that the loss of English would be a threat to the American English speaking tradition. The French have a standing committee that translates foreign words into French to keep the French language pure. In Nigeria, these foreign languages are forced on students in school without comment. Not having an acceptable passing grade in English means not entering university in many instances as a standardized test in English is required for admission in Nigerian universities even if the student was to major in a native language. In African languages is buried the African contextual history and cultural heritage of Africa notwithstanding. A lack of mastering African languages for the African could mean not mastering the African way of life which is needed as a bridge to moving the African context into the future. The pedagogical approach (Jagusah, 2001) of teaching from

the African context has been referred to variously as Afrocentric pedagogy (Spring 2000), Afrocentricity -African centeredness (Asante, 1994) but there is still the issue of how this centeredness is related to African development.

### **African Development:**

As development takes place in a context and not a vacuum, it is poignant to address the issues of dislocation, peripheralization of the self, that may lead to a deficit oriented education or outright miseducation (Asante, 1994; Asmal & James, 2001; Woodson, 1993/1999 in Jagusah 2001). Dewey (1916) says that education is life or is itself life. Dewey means here that life is thoroughly interwoven with education and vice versa. An African educational framework that is dislocated is neither life nor life itself; neither does it give the platform for future meaningful living. Jagusah (2001) believes that this life-centered approach to education is needed to overcome what Kunjufu called the *seasoning* effect (Spring, 2000 in Jagusah 2001) that trains Africans to subordinate themselves to the European way. There are processes that have been in place since the colonial period that perpetuate this seasoning through various mechanisms and modalities including education and finance that continue to instill *fear of the owner* through the use of threats and punishment for disobedience (Spring, 2000 in Jagusah 2001).

This European dominance of the African discourse must be turned around for there to be a true African centered development in Africa. For instance, after fifty years of drilling for oil in Nigeria, Nigerians are yet to control all aspects of oil exploration and refining which appears to be the result of a lack of knowledge transfer and not the lack of willingness to learn or the capacity to know. The consequence to Nigerian development is economic loss and expertise incapacity. Foreign technical expatriates from overseas are still brought in at exorbitant salaries

to do what Nigerians should have been able to do after fifty years of oil exploration. This condition continues to transfer wealth back to the West.

As research into the African past is lacking, it is therefore difficult to find ready scholarly work that presents Africa from an African center that is equally acceptable on the global stage. This perhaps explains why the African has had to assert himself anew but under adverse conditions (Asante, 1994) as he is yet to reclaim his narrative. And this because, the African narrative was taken over by the forced European narrative as taught by the Euro-centered educational framework instituted during colonialism and perpetuated by dissonant Africans who accept such as the standard. The result is that Africans find it difficult to solve their educational and developmental problems by themselves.

Many educated Africans are direct beneficiaries of Western financial sponsorship that *support* their research and they are perhaps therefore divided in mind between loyalty to their African heritage center and the paid perspective. In some ways, this is a global issue; “[t]he freedom for western finance capital and for the vast transnational monopolies under its umbrella to continue stealing from the countries and people of Latin America, Africa, Asia and Polynesia is today protected by conventional and nuclear weapons” (Wa Thiong’o, 1986).

### **Nigerian Education Performance and Related Issues:**

Nigeria’s political and economic crises have had a negative impact on Nigeria’s educational sector since independence from Great Britain on October 1, 1960 (Obanya, 2005). The injection and entry of military rule into the Nigerian political scene through coups and counter coups between 1960 and 1999 has produced great instability in the development of Nigeria as a civil society of laws. The last years of military rule between 1983 and 1999 have

been the worst in its effect on education. Standing out in a category by itself are the years under General Abacha who singularly is the worst of the military generals to rule Nigeria on account of corruption and harsh rule and defunding of education. His rule was marked by massive economic, political and social stagnation and violence to suppress any opposition. A Conference background paper on anti-corruption standards and asset recovery presented in September 2007 in Bali, Indonesia, is very instructive. It is titled; *General Sani Abacha – A Nations’ Thief*. The paper says concerning Abacha’s rule as Military Head of State in Nigeria: “The rule of law had little place in the scheme of Abacha’s government. Political imprisonment and torture and summary execution were commonplace. Nigeria’s ... President, Olusegun Obasanjo[1999-2007], was imprisoned by Abacha in 1995 and was placed under sentence of death.” But not everyone was as lucky as Obasanjo as he went on to become president of the country. Many were executed or disappeared.

The lesser known activist, poet and politician, Ken Saro-Wiwa, was not so fortunate. His execution in 1997[sic] [1995] sparked waves of protest around the world. The execution was carried out on the eve of the Commonwealth Leaders’ Conference in Sydney, Australia. Abacha and his ministers were refused entry to the Conference and Nigeria was suspended from the Commonwealth and became a pariah state (Daniel, et. al., 2007).

Ken Saro-Wiwa was also from Ogoni land from where the government has taken oil from the ground for over fifty years and left behind a massive environmental pollution while the natives have had little to show for the oil. He organized his people to demand for change and along with seven others was *tried* and summarily hanged. The people were stunned (Aluko, 1995). They were in the way of the oil money. Greenpeace, the environmental group, spoke from London on 10th November 1995; “The blood of Ken Saro-Wiwa will permanently stain the name of

Shell, Greenpeace said today in response to the news that Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni were, according to widespread rumours, hanged this morning in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.” The article quotes Thilo Bode, Executive Director of Greenpeace International:

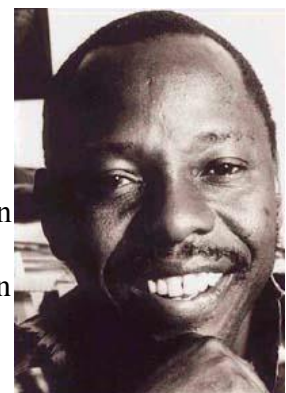
Ken Saro-Wiwa was hanged today for speaking out against the environmental damage to the Niger Delta caused by Shell Oil through its 37 years of drilling in the region. Ken Saro Wiwa was campaigning for what Greenpeace considers the most basic of human rights: the right for clean air, land and water. His only crime was his success in bringing his cause to international attention.

Shell Petroleum thereafter resumed work in Ogoni land after Saro-Wiwa was executed. The environmental pollution left behind is still a death to the people and the area. The environmental loss is often irredeemable. I am unsure if a calculation of the comprehensive damage done to the people and the environment on account of oil exploration and drilling in the Niger Delta can be computed. Outstanding Nigerians have died while agitating for oil rights. Regular Nigerians have died also. It is a continuing price to pay for oil. The irony remains as pointed out that the Niger Deltans have benefitted the least from this oil exploration.

This is ExecutedToday.com’s entry on Saro-Wiwa:

On this date in 1995, author Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight fellow activists of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) were hanged by the Nigerian military junta in Port Harcourt. *(Picture to right: Ken Saro-Wiwa)*

Saro-Wiwa, the author of works such as *Sozaboy*, was already considered among Nigeria’s greatest writers before becoming an activist for the rights of his Ogoni people in the face of Nigeria’s lucrative and ecologically destructive Niger Delta oil trade. Few benefits of that trade returned to the politically marginalized Ogoni, whose overwhelming response to MOSOP’s organizing soon began choking off oil exploitation in Ogoniland and brought a violent response from the Nigerian dictatorship — operating hand in glove with Shell Oil, as Saro-Wiwa himself noted in his closing



remarks to the sham tribunal that convicted him of inciting a murderous riot. [Sara-Wiwa said to the Military tribunal:]

*'I repeat that we all stand before history. I and my colleagues are not the only ones on trial. Shell is here on trial and it is as well that it is represented by counsel said to be holding a watching brief. The Company has, indeed, ducked this particular trial, but its day will surely come and the lessons learnt here may prove useful to it for there is no doubt in my mind that the ecological war that the Company has waged in the Delta will be called to question sooner than later and the crimes of that war be duly punished. The crime of the Company's dirty wars against the Ogoni people will also be punished. In my innocence of the false charges I face here, in my utter conviction, I call upon the Ogoni people, the peoples of the Niger delta, and the oppressed ethnic minorities of Nigeria to stand up now and fight fearlessly and peacefully for their rights. History is on their side. God is on their side. For the Holy Quran says in Sura 42, verse 41: "All those that fight when oppressed incur no guilt, but Allah shall punish the oppressor. Come the day."'*

Petroleum sourcing and exploitation in the Niger Delta and its effects on the region and peoples in addition to the ethical responsibilities of Corporations have been studied in depth (Levy & Kolk, 2002; Wheeler & Fabig, 2002; Aguilera et al, 2007; Basu, 2008) and lays outside the immediate purview of this research. Its mention here is to underscore it as a key destabilizing factor in the Nigerian polity that affects education directly. The agitation for oil rights or resource rights has led to violence and death in the Niger Delta, disrupting the education process in the affected areas. It is also instructive to note that the international corporations doing business in Nigeria have often been willing collaborators with the tyrannical military leaders who killed their people to keep the oil flowing for the foreign democratic markets.

With a weak economy; the funding priority and governmental will was not there to implement the often laudable educational policies that are on the books in Nigeria. The result for the Nigerian educational sector has been a continuous struggle for survival amidst declining standards all around. A way forward includes; taking a critical look at the entire system as the policy framework that undergirds it is not producing the expected outcome measured in student

success (Obanya, 2005). Some of the critical areas include among others; focus on equity, access, funding, quality, and the management of the system.

The policy tilt of various Nigerian governments has often prioritized education as a key stake in the Nigerian developmental master plan. The reality however has not measured up. According to Moja (2000), “....Education has been at the top of the list of some previous governments yet the education system is still far from being ready for the challenges of the new century”. Moja further explains that the Nigerian education system is not unlike that of other developing countries – in that these are not adequately preparing students for the present global society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Moja draws the conclusion that what Nigerian education needs ought to be a continuous search for excellence supported by the political will for good governance and transparency. A further analysis here suggests that these have been lacking in the system and/or these factors have not been consistently present in the Nigerian education system.

### **The National Policy on Education**

Nigeria has a National Policy on Education (NPE) document which is supposed to serve as a guide line for directing educational policy to shadow and drive the government developmental vision for the country. Published in 1977, seven years after the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970), and as a response to the educational disparity within the country, this document has seen revisions and reformulation over the years. It was revised in 1981 and again in 1990.

The 1981 *National Policy on Education* among other things identified the following educational outcomes for Nigeria:

- a) A free and democratic society;
- b) A just and egalitarian society;



- c) A united, strong and self-reliant nation;
- d) A great and dynamic economy
- e) A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

The present revised and updated formulation of the NEP was done in 1999 (after 15 years of military rule) under the leadership and presidency of Olusegun Obasanjo, former Military Head of State 1996-1979, and civilian President 1999-2007. His government, like other past governments, saw the need to match education to the needs of an emerging democracy in Nigeria. Moja (2000) sums it up this way: “The entire education system would benefit from coherent national policy development rather than piecemeal reforms.” The necessity of this latest revision and updating of the NEP is driven by internal and external pressures. Externally, Moja is hopeful that the new policies take cognizance of the recommendations of entities like UNESCO and other donor entities who have invested in Nigerian education over the years. Internally, Nigeria ought to create a policy framework that recognizes Nigeria’s strategic role in an emerging democracy and economy.

Competition from other sectors of the Nigerian economy, including health, public safety, social welfare, etc., has often in the past driven education to the back burner of government priorities in practice and in spite of the acknowledged importance of education as a developmental keystone. The government of President Obasanjo 1999-2007, and subsequently the government of Dr. Goodluck Jonathan 2010-present, appears to have the political will to recognize in practice the invaluable role of education in Nigeria’s development. “Education is once more a priority in its broad national development strategy” (Moja, 2000).

There are challenges to Nigeria's educational reform in spite of the renewed NEP trust. Though the present democratic government in Nigeria appears to have the political will demonstrated by the launching of a Universal Basic Education (UBE) agenda in 1999, there is still the challenge of delivery on the policy agenda. These challenges include funding and financial constraints and the need for new expertise in a digital new century needing a broad range of technical expertise and assistance from within and without. Due to a lack of past policy continuity and implementation and follow through over the years, in addition to interruptions in the system by military coups and rule, which produced a systemic social dysfunction, the platform to realizing the new trust of the 1999 NEP and the UBE is indeed a challenge for the present government. In the words of Moja (2000),

....Universal primary education has been a stated priority of every government since its introduction in the seventies. The actual commitment of the different governments to the scheme, however, has varied substantially. The economic problems encountered have also contributed to the difficulties experienced in its implementation.

The key then to a successful implementation demands a higher level of synergy between several factors including; adequate resources, better division of labor among different levels of government and the involvement of all stakeholders with a voice on how the new system is constituted and implemented. Stakeholders here include students, parents, the business communities, teachers and administrators and the cultural communities that make up a diverse Nigeria. Efforts in the past in recognition of the role of all stakeholders led to administrative reforms in 1990 and 1993 (Roja, 2000).

### **The Universal Basic Education (UBE)**

The Universal Basic Education launched in 1999 and implemented in 2000, sought among other things to sync with international agreements with external entities such as the “Education for All (EFA) 2000”. According to Adepoju & Fabiyi (2007), “[the] fundamental principle of UBE in Nigeria is that everybody must have access to equivalent education comprehensively and co-educationally.” However, this is nothing new as Nigeria has had several similar policies that all attempted to make education available to all Nigerians and most of the essentials of those policies failed. In other words according to them,

The concept of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) introduced in 1976.[sic] (6 years education) was to change into Basic education (9 years education) twenty three years later[1999]. Basic education is not completely new but its meaning has been broadened after the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA),[sic]and the Framework for Action to meet Basic learning needs. The policy provisions of these documents surpass what was on ground then. Three demographic studies on the existing national situation in the primary education sector revealed that, 12% of primary school pupils sit on the floor, 38% classrooms have no ceilings, 87% classrooms overcrowded, while 77% pupils lack textbooks. Almost all sampled teachers are poorly motivated coupled with lack of community interest and participation in the management of the schools.

The above analysis describes the conditions on the ground at the launch of the UBE in 1999. This policy was earlier adopted in 1990 by Nigeria, at the Jomtien (Thailand) World Conference when a world declaration on “Education for All” (EFA) was announced. The UBE has also benefited from other international conferences like the Dakar (Senegal) Declaration of April

2000 which has assisted in giving focus to the Nigerian UBE program. Here are the goals of the UBE program at its launch (Adepoju & Fabiyi, 2007);

- a) Developing in the entire citizenry, a strong conscientiousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion
- b) Provision of free Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian child of school going age
- c) Reducing drastically the incidence of drop out from the formal school system
- d) Catering for young persons, their schooling as well as other out of school children or adolescent through appropriate form of complementary approaches to the provision of UBE
- a) Ensuring the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for the life long living.

The role of the National Primary Education Commission has seen restructuring especially in the area of managing the budget as part of the changes brought in by the UBE. Their new function is geared more towards addressing issues of equity and access, quality control and a heightened prioritization on gender issues.

Non-Governmental Agencies and external donors including UNESCO have a long history of contributing to Nigeria's education. As at January 2000; Moja provides the following data and cost estimate coming out of a Nigeria-UNESCO collaboration mission:

- i) Access to basic education (179.5 million Naira)
- ii) Massive reduction of illiteracy as part of a strategy for poverty alleviation (1.6 billion Naira)
- iii) Improvement of quality in higher education (7.050 billion Naira)

- iv) Technical and Vocational education (1.1 billion Naira)
- v) Teacher training (11 billion Naira)

Estimated around USD 210 million (in 2000, will be higher with inflation in 2011) as anticipated cost of educational reforms. The significance of this number demonstrates the scale of cost for funding reform in this new democracy. In addition to the funding estimate, the Nigerian-UNESCO mission identified other areas of needs; curriculum reform, a revised NEP and a better access to higher education through long distance learning as long term goals (Moja, 2000).

Through an unstable economy, under inept military governments, Nigeria's educational system expanded (more universities both private and public were created under an unstable atmosphere politically and economically) putting into question, the very quality of Nigeria's educational system and the quality of the education acquired by the graduates of the system. Moja 2000 concludes by pointing out that equity, access, funding, better management must be the areas of focus for any new educational policies.

### **A Profile of the Nigerian Educational System**

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is located on the West Coast of Africa with 36 federated states and an estimated population of 158 million people. Of this population, over 30 million are students. The country is rich in petroleum and many other natural resources. The three majority tribes are Yoruba in the southwest, Ibo in the eastern region and Hausa in the north with the Ibibios/Annangs/Efiks as the fourth largest. Although people speak their native languages, the lingua franca is still English. Pidgin English which is like Creole is spoken in most cities. The dominant two religions are Christianity and Islam with the African traditional religion (a religion of the forefathers) as a third.

Nigeria gained its independence from the British in 1960 and became a sovereign nation. For about 15 years since a coup in 1983, it was under military rule. During that period, the tertiary institutions were plagued with riots and strikes resulting in a decline in the quality of the educational system. Educational institutions are still in the process of recuperating from the neglect of the former governments. A democratic government was voted in in February 1999. Retired General Olusegun Obasanjo was elected president and was succeeded in 2007 by President Yar'Adua who died in office 2010 and was succeeded by the current President Dr. Goodluck Jonathan a former university professor and state Governor.

The Federal Government of Nigeria regards education as an instrument for effecting national development. The philosophy on education is based on the development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen and the provision of equal educational opportunities for all citizens of the nation at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system. The implementation of educational policy from theory to practice has been a major challenge in Nigeria. The official languages of instruction in Nigerian institutions are the local native language and English Primary 1-3 and English only from Primary 4 to tertiary levels. The Ministry of Education is the government body charged with the duty of regulating procedures and maintaining standards. They operate a top down structure.

The educational system is made up of formal and informal approaches.

### **Informal Education:**

Some youth often drop out of the formal school system and join the informal system to learn a trade. This is made up of apprenticeships which are privately set up to acquire non formal skills in specific areas of trades. Mechanics, carpenters, masons, market traders, metal workers,

etc., learn their trade by observing the *master* who teaches them directly through a process of watch and learn. The master will then decide when the apprentice has ‘freed’, i.e., has acquired enough skills to go off on his own. He is then set up with his shop or settled with the tools to start either from the master or the apprentice’s family.

### **Islamic education – Qur’anic schools:**

Where ever Islam spread so also spread Islamic schools for the teaching of Islam. According to Obanya (2005); by the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Qur’anic schools and Islamic education had already taken root in the Kanem –Bornu Empire of northern Nigeria and from there it spread to new areas of converts. Most Qur’anic schools are located at the local mosques which double as a place of worship and a school. The syllabus generally consists of reading, writing and memorization of Qur’anic texts. With the introduction of the UPE, the base Islamic curriculum was expanded to include subjects such as English, Mathematics, Social Studies, etc. The schools that have this boosted curriculum are called Islamiyyah schools. “The role of this type of education (Qur’anic/Islamiyyah) has become more and more significant for the shaping of a national education system in Nigeria. An estimated, 30% of school-age children are in the Qur’anic/Islamiyyah schools” Obanya (2005).

### **Formal Education:**

The Nigerian educational system presently runs what it calls 9-3-4 system which was implemented in 2000 as part of its education reform package. This translates into 9 years of basic education (Primary 1-6 and Junior Secondary 1-3), then 3 years of Senior Secondary Education and 4 years of University education. Prior to 2000, the system was called a 6-3-3-4 system and basic education stopped at the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade making junior secondary “optional”. The current system

has extended basic education to the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade or Junior Secondary 3 (JS3). Private organizations like churches, the State government or the Federal government directly administer schools in Nigeria according to standards set by the Federal and State governments respectively based on law according to the National Policy on Education (NPE).

### **Primary Education:**

The official age for beginning primary school is six and this level lasts for six years terminating with a school leaving certificate. Students study among other subjects Mathematics, English language, Christian Religious knowledge or Islamic Religious Knowledge, Science and one of the local native languages (Hausa, Yoruba and Ibo, Efik or Ibibio, etc.). Private schools, often called Nursery-Primary schools, offer additional subjects including Computer Science, French and Art. Primary school students are required to take a Common Entrance Examination for admission into Government secondary schools and a similar exam for admission into the private secondary schools.

### **Secondary Education**

Secondary education lasts six years. The first three years are now part of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Program as launched by the government in 1999 and implemented in the 2000 school year. A Junior Secondary School exam (JSS3 exam) is taken at the end of the first three years which is a qualifying exam for Senior Secondary School. Senior Secondary begins in the 4<sup>th</sup> year (Senior Secondary 1 – SS1) and by Senior Secondary School 2 (SS2), students begin



taking the General Certificate in Education (GCE) Ordinary Levels exam, which is not mandatory, but taken by most students as an option for University entry qualification and as a preparation for the Senior Secondary School Examination which comes up at the completion of Senior Secondary School 3 (SS3).

### **Secondary School Funding:**

There are some differences between Federal Government Secondary Schools, State Secondary Schools and Private Secondary schools in funding, infrastructure and the qualification of teachers creating some disparity in access and the quality of education obtained by students. Accordingly, the Federal Government with about 2 schools per each of the 36 states in Nigeria, funds its schools directly. These schools therefore have access to the full benefits of the federal purse in access to modern technology, better qualified teachers other related values. State governments fund their school based on the resources available to the states. The richer states have more and the poorer states have less. For example, Akwa Ibom State, under the foresight and leadership of a young and dynamic governor, Godswill Akpabio, implemented a *Free and Compulsory Education* Grades 1-12 in the 2008/2009 academic year. This government also has access to resources on account of its contribution to the federal purse through petroleum drilled from its territory. The government decided to put this access to resource into good use by prioritizing education. According to the governor, all a child has to do is show up in school. This has led to a tripling of the K-12 student population in this particular state (personal communication NseAbasi Akpan – Commissioner for Education & Aniekan Umanah – Commissioner for Communication, 2011); however, this is not the case in many other states. The federal Government Colleges cost about \$100.00 in fees and related expenditure but it is tuition free. State schools differ and range from completely free to mostly free in cost. In most states it

costs about \$200.00 for mandated uniforms and related fees. Private schools are very expensive ranging about \$1000.00 – 2000.00 to attend. However, they also have smaller classes, better qualified teachers and access to necessary tools for efficient teaching and learning.

Secondary school teachers are required to possess a minimum qualification of the National Certificate in Education (NCE) requiring three years of post-secondary study or a Bachelor's degree requiring four years of post-secondary study. Access to technology, updated libraries and updated laboratories and related tools for learning depends on the school and who is funding it. State secondary schools and church owned private schools tend to have limited funding.

**Subjects offered at the Junior Secondary School Level include:**

1. ENGLISH
2. MATHEMATICS
3. INTEGRATED SCIENCE
4. SOCIAL STUDIES
5. INTRODUCTORY TECHNOLOGY
6. BUSINESS STUDIES
7. HOME ECONOMICS
8. FINE ART
9. FRENCH

10. NIGERIAN LANGUAGES (IGBO, HAUSA, YORUBA, EFIK)

11. ARABIC

12. CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE

13. ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE

14. AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE

15. MUSIC

16. PHYSICAL EDUCATION

17. HEALTH EDUCATION

At the Junior Secondary Level, subject selection is limited to a choice of a Nigerian language and either Christian Religious Knowledge or Islamic Religious Knowledge, all other subjects are compulsory.

**Subjects offered at the Senior Secondary Level (SS1-3) include:**

1. ENGLISH LANGUAGE

2. MATHEMATICS

3. LITERATURE-IN ENGLISH

4. NIGERIAN LANGUAGES (IGBO, HAUSA AND YORUBA, EFIK, IBIBIO, etc.)

5. BIOLOGY

6. CHEMISTRY

7. PHYSICS

8. ECONOMICS

9. COMMERCE

10. FOOD AND NUTRITION

11. CLOTHING AND TEXTILE

12. HOME MANAGEMENT

13. COMPUTER SCIENCE\TYPING

14. FRENCH

15. MUSIC

16. APPLIED ELECTRICITY

17. AUTO MECHANICS

18. TECHNICAL DRAWING

19. HISTORY

20. GEOGRAPHY

21. CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE

22. ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE

23. ACCOUNTING

24. GOVERNMENT

25. PHYSICAL EDUCATION

26. AGRICULTURE

27. ARABIC

28. WOOD WORK

29. METAL WORK

30. VISUAL ART

The Federal Government controls policy on education and is adhered to by all secondary schools in Nigeria. Based on the National Syllabus decided upon by the Federal Government through the Ministry of Education and in collaboration with the standards of the governing policies of the West African Examination Council (WACE), all Senior Secondary students are required to study English, Mathematics, one science subject and one Nigerian language. All other subjects are electives based on their area of concentration in either Arts or Sciences.

### **Secondary School – University Transition Examinations**

The General Certificate of Education Examination (GCE) was replaced by the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) as the terminal examination for secondary schools with the implementation of the 6-3-3-4 system. The GCE is still available as an external examination and matches in standard to the SSCE. The SSCE is conducted in May/June whereas the GCE is conducted in October/November as a supplement. Both examinations are conducted by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) the government body for managing

secondary school exit examinations. Registration allows for a maximum of nine and a minimum of seven subjects for the examination by each student, however, Mathematics and English Language are compulsory subjects for all students.

The grading is as follows:

A1, A2, A3 or A1, B2, B3, B4, (Equivalent to Distinctions Grade)

C4, C5, C6, or B4, B5, B6, (Equivalent to Credit Grade)

P7, P8 or D7, D8, E (Pass Grade)

F9 (Fail Grade)

### **University Admission: GCE, WACE, SSCE-JAMB**

The University Matriculation Examination (UME) was first administered in 1978 based on Decree No. 2 of 1978 (amended by Decree No. 3 of 1989) which empowered the Joint Matriculation and Examination Board (JAMB) “to conduct Matriculation Examinations for entry into all degree awarding institutions in Nigeria and place suitably qualified candidates in the available spaces in the institutions.” Through the 1970s and mid 1980s the GCE/WACE was the exit examination from secondary school and its passing, a prerequisite for university education. This was replaced by the SSEC in the late 1980s. The University Matriculation Examination (UME) is still conducted by the JAMB. To enter university study in Nigeria, a student must have at least a minimum of C in English and C in three other subjects in addition to meeting the cut-off point in the UME. Contingent on some study programs (Science, Arts, Social Sciences), many of the universities may require specific subject credit pass or higher cut-off points in the UME to gain admission. A credit pass in Mathematics may be required to study Medicine or

Pharmacy for example or a credit pass in Physics to study Physics as a major. Some universities have remedial programs that enable students to complete remedial courses before they can matriculate.

Nontraditional students who are not transitioning from secondary school to university can gain direct admission with related post-secondary education certificates and diplomas including the National Certificate in Education (merit pass) and the National Diploma (OND/HND) or other equivalent advanced qualifications.

### **Language of Instruction:**

In Nigeria, English is the lingua-franca. At the elementary school level, bi-lingual instruction (English and the local vernacular) is used through the first three years of learning contingent on location, thereafter English is used through university. In major cities where multiple languages are spoken, English is the language of instruction at all levels. The official language of instruction in Nigerian institutions is English.

### **University Study Duration:**

The government of Nigeria sees university education as an instrument of national development and also sees in the same light, equal access to education to all citizens from elementary, secondary and tertiary levels and this as part of the NPE. Duration of study varies according to the discipline and governing rules. Following is a snapshot example:

- a) Social sciences /Humanity related disciplines 4 years (two semester sessions per year)
- b) Engineering/Technology related disciplines 5 years (two semester sessions per year)

- c) Pharmacy 5 years (two semester sessions per year)
- d) Medicine (Vet/ Human) 6 years (have longer sessions)
- e) Law 5 years (two semester sessions per year)

### **Graduate Programs**

The duration of Graduate Programs depends on the specific field of study.

- MASTERS PROGRAM 12 - 36 Months
- DOCTORAL PROGRAMS 48 - 84 Months

The classes of degrees required for acceptance to Graduate Programs include:

- First Class, and Second Class Upper

### **Nigerian Polytechnic Colleges**

These were established as a response to the need to train technical manpower and middle management. Entry requirement is lower than a conventional university (3 credits including English) but there is no open enrollment like in American Community Colleges. It is set up to award the Ordinary National Diploma (OND) after two years of study. The OND is a close equivalent to the Associate Degree in American colleges. Thereafter students are supposed to complete a year of industrial attachment where they learn real world applications at sites related to their area of study. Should they choose to return to school, students then complete another two years of study for the Higher National Diploma (HND) which is the equivalent of a Bachelor's degree from a conventional university. Today, some of the Polytechnics are awarding conventional degrees deviating from the original technical bent of establishing the polytechnics.



This deviation has had more to do with the meeting market demands for education as the commoditization of education in Nigeria continues to meet the high demand for advanced learning.

### **Groupings of Nigerian Universities:**

Nigerian universities are grouped according 'generations', meaning when they were created.

#### **First Generation Universities:**

There were five universities established between 1948 and 1965, following the recommendations of the Ashby Commission set up by the British Colonial Government that studied the needs for university level education for Nigeria. Today these universities are fully funded by the Federal Government and continue to meet the manpower needs of the country and continue to set basic standards for university education in the country. They continue to act as the reference point for manpower development and provisions of standards, for the subsequent establishment of other universities in Nigeria.

#### **Second Generation Universities:**

Unable to meet needs of the growing number of qualified students ready for university education, the government began to open additional universities to meet demands and also to meet the growing needs for scientific and technological developments locally and globally. Between 1970 and 1985, 12 additional universities were established and located in various parts of the country.

### **Third Generation Universities:**

These were set up driven by manpower and developmental needs in the technological and agricultural sectors. Ten additional universities were added between 1985 and 1999. Finally, from 2000 – 2011, the last set of universities (mostly private) were added, witnessing the largest growth in university establishment.

### **State Universities:**

Responding to pressures from qualified students from each state on their state Governments, especially from those who could not readily gain admissions to any of the Federal Universities in the country, state began looking into state universities. The pressures originated mostly from states with longer traditions of secondary education and these are mainly in the East and the West. This led to the establishment of State Universities by the states to meet the demands. Today each of the 36 states in Nigeria has a dedicated state university that is directly funded by the State.

### **Private Universities:**

Recognizing the need to encourage private participation in the provision of university education, the Federal Government established a law 1993, allowing private sectors to establish universities following guidelines prescribed by the Government. Since 1999, a number of private universities have been established throughout the country in addition to the public universities, bringing the total number of universities in Nigeria to 118 (NUC, 2012).

### **Overview of Higher Education in Nigeria:**

Higher education began in Nigeria with the establishment of Yaba Higher College in 1932. The goal of setting up the College was to produce *helpers* or *assistants* for the British colonial administrators in Nigeria for specific low level tasks that could relieve the colonial administrators. Several commissions have been set up over the years to assess the educational needs of Nigeria. The Elliot Commission was set up by the Colonial Government with the mandate to “examine the principles which would guide the promotion of higher education, learning and research and the development of universities in the colonies” (Olujuwon, 2003). Adesina (1998), writes that the commission, after extensive travel in West Africa, recommended that three university colleges be set up in Gold Coast (Ghana), Nigeria and Sierra Leone. This was the majority report. However, a minority report criticized the establishment of three University Colleges on the grounds that the region did not have enough students for admission into the colleges. On account of the resulting problems from the report, a second commission, the Asquith Commission was set up. This commission recommended that the colonial universities should be set up as colonial campuses of foreign based universities back in England. The new colonial universities could therefore not control their policy framework nor grant autonomous degrees as they were affiliates of foster-parent universities. This lack of policy framework autonomy will in time plague the slant of the kind of education several generations of Africans will receive.

According to the Nigerian University Commission (NUC) there are 118 universities in Nigeria in 2011. They are broken down as follow:

- i) 36 Federal Universities
- ii) 37 State Universities

iii) 45 Private Universities

Other degree awarding institutions are polytechnics and the one military university.

The 1977 National Education Policy based its educational philosophy on the five national goals which are:

- i) a free and democratic society
- ii) a just and equalitarian society
- iii) a united, strong and self reliant nation
- iv) a great and dynamic economy
- v) a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens.

The specific goals of the National Policy on Education (NPE, 1998) are as follows:

- a) Contribute to national development through high-level relevant manpower training.
- b) Develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and the society.
- c) Develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments.
- d) Acquire both physical and intellectual skills, which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society.
- e) Promote and encourage scholarship and community service.
- f) Forge and cement national unity and promote national and international understanding and interaction (in Olujuwon, 2002).

These goals are again very clear, namely that tertiary institutions ought to seek to teach, research and develop programs while maintaining high educational standards to aid the development of a

functional vibrant and cohesive nation. The realization of these lofty goals has yet to translate from policy to practice arising from “a combination of military authoritarianism, economic crises and politics” (Olujuwon, 2002). He further cites Sansaliyu (1991) as quoted by Alaku (1999) that there is a lamentable gap between the specificity of policy decisions in education and the measurable realizations of those policies.

### **Areas and Issues needing attention:**

In his critique of the gap between policy formulation and policy implementation, Olujuwon identifies some areas of needing attention as Nigeria seeks to reposition its educational trust to align with national goals.

### **Absence of National Consciousness:**

There is no functional mechanism to bring the country together educationally to create an inbuilt consciousness of national unity. Though the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970) and other socio-political forces have had a balkanizing effect on the country, efforts by successive governments attempted unification using education among other things. At the Secondary school level, through federally funded Federal Government Colleges, the so called “Unity Schools” were established around the nation. Students were intentionally admitted from across the nation to be mixed and educated together. Today, these Unity Schools reflect a disproportional representation of the local population, defeating the national character agenda as aspired at their inception. The admissions process at the Federal Universities in the country was also geared to achieving a unifying effect for the nation. This is not the case as current policy of 60% local and 40% other admission platform, is not being followed (Olujuwon, 2002).

There is no strict supervision of whatever policy is already on the ground due to several factors including the lack of resources to supervise at the national level. Also, because of a lack of funding from the government, the environment that is conducive to self-regulation is absent. The reality of student population at other universities, state or private, reflect the absence of this unifying element through the admissions process. Many blame the lack of security and reduced funding as major reasons why parents keep their children closer to their states of origin.

### **Professors and the Learning Process:**

This is a two tier problem; the actions of professors and the actions of the government which has ultimate responsibility for education in the country. Following upon the lack of adequate funding from government especially in the periods of military intervention and military rule, professors resorted to labor strikes to get government attention in regards to their condition of service including low salaries and the lack of teaching tools. It appears security was a higher priority for the military governments than education. Starved of resources, professors began an aggressive practice of raising money on the side using the student population. Instead of producing academic papers, they sold handouts or lecture notes and students were directly or indirectly coerced into buying these or chance failing the course.

Other derivative abuses include exchange of sexual favors for grades and selling of degrees leading to public scandals in Nigeria Universities plastered on Nigerian dailies. The uncertainty generated by labor strikes and truncated academic calendars brought on a state of chaos to education. Quoting Noah (1999), Olujuwon (2002) captures the resolution of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in 1995 who said that “it could no longer vouch for the quality of Nigerian University degrees and resolved to apologize to the nation on behalf

of the Senates of Nigerian Universities”. Though there have been changes in the system since 1995, some still believe that teaching and learning in the country is not meaningful (Olujuwon, 2002).

During the 1990s and continuing, professors, unsure of their pay or when they would get back to the classroom on account of labor strikes, began to engage in extracurricular businesses for themselves to make ends meet. Academics and academic focus suffered as a consequence. It also meant that the students could not guarantee if they had the learning to pass their exams or when they would finally graduate. The practical consequence on return from labor strikes were truncated academic calendars as teaching and learning became jammed packed into weeks to maintain academic years. This context engendered an opportunistic atmosphere where students were exploited for financial gain by some within the school system. Other students took advantage of the situation and paid a quid pro quo for grades through sexual or other favors. The abuse was like an open secret (Personal communication university of Uyo students, 2011). Professors themselves found their professional development atrophied because the system was not working. There was a general state of stagnation professionally and academically.

In 2001, Olusegun Obasanjo, sitting President of Nigeria then, in a national televised broadcast labeled university lectures as lazy. The President according to Oluwujon (2002) held them accountable for making little contribution to “national development but only interested in sales of handouts, harassment of female students and above all, the Government will not negotiate on salary increase since lecturers abandon their work and retire to their staff club.” This was a serious indictment that stirred up great emotions in the academic community and elsewhere. The President’s indictment was in line with what others had already pointed out (Shonekan, 1993; Ivowi, 1993, Olujuwon, 1999; in Olujuwon, 2002) that “the disruption of

academic calendar, non-completion of syllabus and a conducive learning environment have been attributed to a high increase in examination malpractices and anti-social behaviours like cultism and drug addiction are [sic] the effects of students not fully engaged in academic activities.”

University students consequentially became oriented to a pseudo value set that rewarded buying your way through university than working/studying your way through university. The learning process has suffered and a false moral orientation has replaced the ideal of the university as the place to develop a national character and a solid moral framework for the future leaders of the Nigerian society. As at this writing 2011, this moral corruption though reduced is still wide spread through the system (UNIYO, 2011 personal communication).

### **The indifference of Government to education in practice:**

Nigeria has a long history of government interference in education not as a demonstration of government policy for national development but on account of the narrow interests of the particular government in power. Olujuwon (2002) records the interference as having started in 1976 when then military Head of State Gen. Obasanjo removed or sacked some Vice-Chancellors and lecturers by political expediency and without recourse to the due process of law and the governing administrative procedures. According to him, issues of promotion, career advancement, appointments to certain positions, etc., are still at the behest of governors and even commissioners of education. Merit is not enough to advance professionally.

He further reports that nepotism and grandfatherism still affect admission to university and employment. This has led to situations whereby university administrators can act with impunity as they have the protection of the people in power. This absence of due process, a practice accepted in other countries like the United States as *settled law* has ramifications that



trickle down the entire Nigerian educational system including the graduates that the system produces as manpower for the larger society. The moral aspect of education seems to get lost.

### **The Proliferation of Satellite Campuses:**

Commoditization of education seems to have become an emerging trend instead of curriculum development. “What each institution is after is how to generate funds; funds at the expense of academics” (Olujuwon, 2002). This commercialization of education led to the creation of satellite campuses around the country. The quality of these sites as university level centers of learning could not be guaranteed. Falling to the already low ethical atmosphere in academics especially in the 1990s, these satellite campuses in reality acted more like diploma mills for packaging degrees at a price. They often had the tacit collaboration and collusion of university officials including lecturers and other administrators as they operated loosely without any measureable supervision either from the degree granting institutions or from the National Universities Commission which has oversight over university operations in Nigeria. In time these centers were ordered shut down across the entire country. Perhaps this unethical reality was a manifestation of the system’s inability to cater for the trooping number of students eager to enter university in the country. Again perhaps, with government failure to properly fund the universities, this reality of official looking diploma mills, taking advantage of a corrupt moral and political landscape, was a child of circumstances.

### **Immediate Areas of Need and Priority:**

The National Policy on Education advocates a 60/40 divide for science and arts programs. This in theory is the policy. In practice, the reverse has been the case. Left to fend for themselves for so long, different universities have started money making programs that produce

graduates without linking such to manpower development, the NPE or the unique mission for the establishment of particular universities for science, education of the humanities etc. Science universities now aggressively push programs in education instead of programs in science (Olujuwon, 2002). The result is a lopsided overproduction of degrees in the arts, education and the humanities. Science, a necessary area for the national economic developments of nations (Okere, 2005) has been left to suffer because of this loss of focus. Even the students in science complain of learning too much theory in the classroom without adequate and needed practicals (labs) to balance out their education and prepare them adequately to compete for jobs after graduation (UNIYO 2011, personal communication).

### **Staff Development, Research Funding and Post Graduate Access to Advanced Learning:**

As noted earlier, professors have limited options for professional development resulting in a stagnation of what is then taught to students. This researcher experienced first-hand at a local state library in a capital city, students studying biology and physiology from science books published in 1968. Further examination showed the information to be outdated. This library according to students interviewed was better stocked than their university library. Professors living in the same area as students are themselves as limited in terms of access to academic materials. The entire system suffers as it were from a lack of access to research data and information technology.

A dearth of local or national funding for research has led to a reliance on foreign donors who provide funding attached to foreign interests that may or may not fit with the true local needs of the Nigerian environment. Therefore, while research has continued to be carried on by a

select few professors with access to the limited funding local or international, the terms of the reference for such funding may not serve the interests of Nigerian education but that of the funder. More also, continuous external funding and the research so produced carries an external set of values and interests namely that of Europe and increasingly that of China construed within national interests and vision for Africa instead of Africa's vision for itself which has greater local content and control.

### **Lack of Continuity and other inter-institutional Cooperation:**

Lack of vision and policy continuity at Nigerian universities and other tertiary institutions have led to programs being abandoned when there are natural or sudden administrative changes leading to financial wastage and duplication of other resources. Collaborations between national and overseas universities that brought great development change and growth opportunities through the 1970s and 1980s have in the 2000s either died or are minimal. Reciprocal academic exchanges of programs, students and faculty collaborations launched often with fanfare die at the exit of the principal authors or mediators of such programs. "The lack of trust, openness and sincerity of purpose in projects done and embarked upon by predecessors are being discarded because the incumbents do not want to ride on the glory of the predecessors and thus being tagged ineffective men with lack of ideas" (Olujuwon, 2002). The following appears apt in capturing the state of affairs in higher institutions in Nigeria.

Tertiary institutions are in a big crisis. Most lecturers are now either contractors, that is, supplying goods and services to the schools or engage in commercial business within and outside the school at the detriment of the academic calling and purposes. Some lecturers have turned their offices to commercial centres either doing type setting services or

engaging in buying and selling....Some of them argue that they have to resort to this to augment their salaries, which are meager and not regular (Olajuwon, 2002).

Labor agreements between parties are rarely enforced even those signed between academic entities like ASUU and the government. A land mark labor agreement signed in 1992 on salary has been abandoned by successive governments who feel burdened by an agreement that they were not part of. The labor agreement between ASUU and the government signed in 1999 has still to be fully implemented explaining the consequent labor strikes and the inevitable destabilization of the academic calendar and the learning and development process. With the current democratic government in place since 1999, things are gradually changing. However, so much damage already occurred during the long years of government abandonment, especially under military rule, that it will take a long while for the Nigerian tertiary system to recover its moral and administrative moorings. Recent developments bring hope in transparency, like the publication in a national daily of federal grants to Universities by the new Executive Secretary of NUC in 2002 as a sign that perhaps change is coming into the system (Olujuwon, 2002). He concludes by making the following recommendations among others that independence or autonomy at different levels of the educational system will engender effective management. A unification of the admissions process at the university, colleges of education and polytechnics will diversify better, the spread of talented students across all tertiary institutions. Focus on quality instead of quantity of schools will generate the proper training of the required expertise that the nation needs for its development and growth. Institutions must have true autonomy to follow their vision and mission without unnecessary government interference. The moral compass of the school environment needs to be restored for Nigeria to grow as a society and

remain competitive in this era of globalization. Educational funding needs to be reprioritized with needed technology in the classroom to train the next generation.

### **Summary**

The review of literature looked at cultural education and development in Africa while examining culture as a life map leading to a sense of authentic identity. It then examined the nature of education and looked at multicultural education. The review then examined the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods of education which included the role of Europe in the scramble for Africa and the consequences as such affected different aspects of the African experience. The review also examined African centered education as a way forward towards deculturalization and acculturation. Use of African languages for instruction was also examined to anchor African learning in its rootedness. The functionality of Nigerian education performance was examined and so was the National Policy on Education (NPE) and in addition, the universal basic education which is the current policy thrust of the government. A Profile of the Nigerian educational system looked at the entire system primary to tertiary levels. An overview of higher education led to looking at different areas and issues needing attention like funding, corruption etc., as such affect Nigerian education success so as to channel a new way forward.

### **Chapter Three: Research Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the foundational framework of the Nigerian educational system by examining the crisis in the system so as to make recommendations for a way forward. This study used the qualitative methodology. Qualitative research focuses more on verbal data collection and analysis. Fraenkel & Wallen, (2009) present five general characteristics of qualitative research:

- a) The natural setting is the direct source of data, and the researcher is the key instrument in qualitative research.
- b) Qualitative data are collected in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers.
- c) Qualitative researchers are concerned with process as well as product.
- d) Qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively.
- e) How people make sense of their lives is a major concern of qualitative researchers.

This researcher agrees with Fraenkel & Wallen (2009) in their treatment of qualitative research and so approached this study within the understanding of the stated characteristics above.

Chapter Three was concerned with the following: the design of the study; subjects, materials and procedures.

#### **Design:**

The purpose of this study was to further investigate and explain among other things, forces including; the pre-colonial, the colonial and the post-colonial periods of Nigeria education, in relation to the foundational formulation and evolution of the Nigerian educational framework and so describe the crisis within the system. This study used the qualitative methodology and a descriptive design. As this study looked into the past of education in Nigeria, it employed the historical research approach. According to Fraenkel & Wallen (2009); "...the

purpose of a historical study in education is to describe clearly and accurately some aspect of the past as it related to education and/or schooling.” The authors (p.G-3) further explained historical research as; “[t]he systematic collection and objective evaluation of data related to past occurrences to examine causes, effects, or trends of those events that may help explain present events and anticipate future events.”

In the literature review, this study described Nigeria’s educational framework through the pre-colonial, the colonial and the post-colonial within an African historical and cultural matrix to ascertain if there was a relationship between the history, culture and education in the African context. The qualitative purpose of the study was exploratory, descriptive and explanatory as approaches to investigate situations, document events, or circumstances of interests. It was also to discover important variables, and explain forces causing situations and establishing plausible causal links (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009) that have shaped in this instance, African education in general and Nigerian education in particular. These approaches allowed the researcher to explain events, beliefs, attitudes and/or policies that have/are shaping the nature of education in Nigeria. The approaches further allowed the researcher to find out what was happening in the school system in general and at the state level in particular; in terms of particular themes or patterns and also how these patterns or themes linked together or not.

### **Subjects:**

The universe is Africa, the Population is Nigeria, the Invited Sample is made up of 4 groups and the Responding Sample is made up of the same four groups. These four groups participated in this study. The description and explanation of the groups follow:

- a) Focus Group: made up of 8 University Students and 3 University Graduates

- b) Senior Secondary school students: 400 Senior Secondary School Students from three secondary schools (one state public, one federal public, one private)
- c) Teachers and Administrators: 48 High School Teachers and 3 Administrators (principals)
- d) Government Official: 1 Government Official - Commissioner of Education

### **Explanation of Group Membership:**

#### **Group (a) Focus Group**

This group made up the heart of the research participants. The group was made up of 8 University Students and 3 University Graduates. The demographics were; 9 males and 2 females. The group was randomly selected and assembled at the University of Uyo (UNIYO). Two sessions were held on the same day. Session one (1 hour) focused on education in Nigeria in general and session two (1 1/2 hours) focused on their personal experiences of education in Nigeria.

Background of Members of the Focus Group at the University of Uyo:

1. Law student, male
2. Banking and Finance student, male
3. Psychology student (a), male
4. Psychology student (b), male
5. Psychology student (c), male
6. Engineering student, male
7. Mass communication student, female
8. English student, female
9. Graduate of Business Administration (MBA), male (successful businessman)



10. Graduate of Guidance and Counseling (B.Ed), male ( professional counselor)
11. Graduate of Chemistry (B.Sc./PGD) (Male) (On year of National Youth Service)

**Group (b) Senior Secondary School Students:**

Students came from 1 private and 2 public schools located in Akwa Ibom State using convenience sampling. The difference between the schools was through funding source. The private school was funded without any statutory funding assistance or grants from the government. This means that all the students pay their tuition and other related fees to attend school and do not enjoy the free education available in the state and paid for the state or federal governments respectively. The private school was located in the capital city of the state, Uyo.

The state school is funded by the state and not the Federal government. The state public school was located off a major four-lane intercity road in Essien Udim Local Government Area (LGA). Though not in a city, it is however located in a major village with access to modern amenities like electricity, water and easy transportation. The student populations of the school in Uyo and Essien Udim are homogeneous. Less than one percent comes from outside the language group.

The third secondary school was an elite federally funded high school which is part of a national high school system -these were established by the federal government in the 1970's as "Unity Schools". Here, the students are traditionally selected from across the entire country. It is the most heterogeneous of the three schools in population. The goal was to engender national unity by mixing students from all ethnicities and regions and religions across the country to help mix the population (after the Nigerian civil war 1967-1970) and help 'unite' the country through

education. This federally funded high school is located in Ikot Ekpene, a major city like the capital city, Uyo.

All three schools were located in three different cities or LGAs within one state. All three reflected a diversity of the population of the country and also a diversity of the home backgrounds of the students, capturing as it were, a fair representation of the demographics of the region and therefore country. The schools were selected using purposeful sampling as they represent a microcosm of the country Nigeria.

The state high school had the largest student population of approximately 3500 students, the federal government college (some high schools are called ‘colleges’ following the British system) had a population of about 2000 students and the private school had a population of about 700 students -at the time of the study, admissions was still ongoing at all three schools so the numbers are approximations, (personal communication with the principals of all 3 schools, 2011). All three schools were coed. All three schools were boarding and day schools – some students lived on campus and some did not (part of the British colonial heritage).

The research was not controlled for the demographics of sex but grades - the conditions of access to the students did not allow for this. All students were in upper secondary (Senior Secondary (SS 1-3) - last three years of high school and expectedly university bound. Not all the students were involved in the discussions as the researcher visited random classes and engaged only the students who were in those classes during the visit. The number of students participating at the federal school averaged around 100 from about three different classrooms. About 200 students participated at the state public school from about 4 classrooms and at the private school a formal assembly was held with about 100 students participating in the assembly and the

discussion. The researcher did not interfere with the schedule of the schools but instead immersed into the set schedule. The researcher was taken around by a teacher assigned by the principal at each school.

### **Group (c) Teachers and Administrators**

48 Teachers (majority female) and 3 Principals (all female) from the three schools participated in interviews and discussions. All teachers had a minimum qualification as allowed by Nigerian law. The educational background of the teachers was a minimum of the National Certificate in Education (NCE) or a bachelor's degree while the administrators held a masters' degree or its equivalent. The majority of the teachers were female and the three administrators were also female. This is perhaps evidence of the wide participation of women in education and in positions of leadership in the country.

### **Group (d) Government official**

The one government official interviewed was the highest ranking education officer in the state. He is male and holds office as the Commissioner for Education and is a member of the executive council of the state government. The Commissioner for Education, Akwa Ibom State holds the Ph.D. and was very knowledgeable about the history of education in Nigeria in general especially within the framework of the pre-colonial, the colonial and the post-colonial matrix. As top government education officer in the state, he was obviously more excited and eager to talk about education under his leadership in Akwa Ibom state.

The manner of the interview was informal. It was very difficult for the commissioner to find time to meet with the researcher on account of his official responsibilities and duties to the state government. After several phone calls and text messages setting up the meeting, the

commissioner met the researcher at the researcher's hotel suite. Once the interview ensued, he was a willing participant and graciously answered the questions from the researcher. The meeting and interview lasted about one hour and the full spectrum of questions was generously addressed by the commissioner.

### **Materials:**

As a qualitative study, this research relied on the research questions from Chapter One in addition to the Focus Group Interview Questions (Appendix I) to gather data for the research. Using these questions as a guide, all 4 groups were engaged in open discussions with follow up questions for further explanations or clarifications. The variety of groups interviewed and discussions held, allowed for triangulation to enable higher reliability of the qualitative methodology.

### **Procedures: Data Gathering Plan**

The preliminary research began in 2009 through international phone calls to Nigeria to identify possible participants in the research. During this process of open enquiry and conversations with Nigerians educators, administrators and students at all levels, parents and government stakeholders and the business community, the researcher began to shape the topic and formulated relevant interview questions. Following this initial contact, the researcher also began the process of narrowing the field of participants and area of focus. As pointed out in earlier in Chapter One, it is difficult to get data from Nigeria and when found, it is often unreliable, so, the researcher planned for and finally traveled to Nigeria with materials to conduct the research on site in the Fall of 2011. The travel was to obtain reliable data in person.

The Focus Group at UNIYO made up the heart of this research. The researcher selected UNIYO because it is the oldest and largest university in the state of Akwa Ibom. The meeting place was an art garden with a park like environment within campus. Participants sat around on the park tables and benches in some kind of circle. This location was convenient as it is a hang out space for students at the university. The researcher approached random students around the garden and invited them to the research focus group. All invited accepted and stayed for the duration. Eight members of this group were university students and three members were graduates of Nigerian universities for a total of eleven participants.

After the necessary introduction from the researcher about the purpose of the research and the plan of the focus group, members of the group introduced themselves including their areas of study at university. The particulars of the educational backgrounds of the members have been stated earlier in this chapter. A long discussion was held following a set of questions about education in Nigeria in general and education at their university in particular. Session one lasted one hour and session two lasted about an hour and a half. The group also addressed their personal experiences of education in Nigeria.

Students, teachers and administrators from three secondary schools participated in the study: a privately owned secondary school, a state public secondary school owned by the state and a public secondary school owned by the federal government of Nigeria in this way, a larger and divergent population was cached. All schools were visited and discussions held with the administration for permission to talk to the students and teachers. Permission was generously granted at all schools by the administration.

A random sample of students from the schools was selected to participate in the open discussions. The students who participated were the students who were present in school and also in the selected classes/assembly, during the periods on the day the research was conducted. The students were not interviewed directly but participated in a discussion with the same open ended questions used for the other groups. The teachers and administrators were interviewed informally in the teachers' lounges and/or offices. Phone calls and text messages were used to set up the interview with the commissioner for education. The informal method was also used for interviewing the commissioner for education.

Discussion questions for groups outside the Focus Group went along the axis of the research questions from Chapter One and the Focus Group Interview questions. Follow up questions were asked for clarification or depth on the answers given. The researcher was also asked questions to clarify questions that the researcher asked. In this process, the researcher acted as an observer participant. The process was interactive and dynamic and yet followed the plot of the preplanned questions at the heart of the research.

Upper secondary (SS1-3) classrooms were visited at the public and federal secondary school where discussions were held following open ended questions. At the private school, an open assembly was held where similar open ended questions were posed by the researcher and an open discussion ensued based off the same set of questions.

In addition, the researcher also silently observed random classes being taught at all three schools. Both the teachers and the students were orderly and focused in class. The material covered in class was relevant to the subject taught and the process showed wide and enthusiastic student participation.

### **Data Analysis Plan:**

This research sought to reconstruct the past and explained the why of the crisis in Nigerian education along the axis of the pre-colonial, colonial and the post-colonial educational frameworks. It also sought to establish if there were any causal connections between the peculiar history of Nigeria and colonialism, the Nigerian socio-cultural, economic and political context, the Nigerian education framework and the present state of crisis in Nigerian education. The analysis followed this interplay based on the following research questions.

1. To what extent did an educational system exist in Nigeria before colonization?
2. What was the intent and purpose of the British colonial education system?
3. To what extent is the inherited colonial education framework still active in Nigerian post-colonial education policy and practice?
4. Is the Nigerian educational framework and system working within the parameters of the National Policy on Education?
5. What is working in the Nigerian educational system and what is not working and what are the causes?
6. Is the Nigerian educational system competitive in a digital 21<sup>st</sup> century global society and are students and graduates of the system confident in the education they receive?
7. Is there hope for the present educational system in Nigeria and is it sustainable considering poor management, negative socio-political and economic adversities?

### **Research Hypothesis:**

Though not intended at the beginning of this study, as the research evolved especially after the analysis of literature in Chapter Two, the following research hypothesis also evolved:

Is there is a significant relationship between Nigeria's pre-colonial, colonial educational framework and the post- colonial educational system?

### **Summary**

This chapter identified the design of the study, the subjects that participated in the study, the materials used, and the procedures including, the data gathering plan and the data analysis plan. The universe is Africa, the population is Nigeria, the invited sample includes education administrators, teachers, students and graduates within the Nigerian educational system, and the responding sample is made up of four groups. The purposeful sampling methodology was used as this allowed the study to capture a fair representation of the country's general population. Through focus group meetings, interviews, group discussions, classroom observations and related data from other sources, the researcher collected data and put those together using a narrative in Chapter four. Chapter four presented the findings and the analysis of the findings based on the data collected.



## **Chapter Four**

### **Analysis of Findings and Presentation of Results**

In examining what is behind the crisis in the Nigerian educational system, this study sought to also find a way forward towards the development of education in Nigeria. To achieve this purpose, the literature review among other things, looked back at the historical record of education in Nigeria through the pre-colonial, the colonial and the post-colonial periods in an attempt at reconstructing the past so as to perhaps explain the present and predict the future of education in Nigeria. As stated earlier (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009), a historical study in education seeks to describe with clarity and accuracy certain historical aspects as such affect education or schooling. There are aspects of the educational system of Nigeria that appear to affect education and schooling in Nigeria. The trip by the researcher to Nigeria was to capture the findings in person to increase the reliability of the data. Presented here are the findings and the analysis.

Earlier, the research presented a detailed description of four groups that participated in the study. The four groups that participated in the study are:

- (a) a focus group at the local university (UNIYO)
- (b) senior secondary school students,
- (c) high school teachers and administrators, and
- (d) the Commissioner for Education.

Research data was collected from these four groups. The presentation of data began with the Focus Group as this group made up the heart of the study.

**(a)Focus Group at UNIYO:**

A random sampling method was used in choosing this group. This focus group was made up of 11 members; 8 university students and 3 university graduates. Two members were female and 8 were male. The sex divide was not intentional but represented those present at the time the group was randomly selected. Every student had an equal chance of being selected male or female. The population of the university is about equally divided between male and female. Neither male nor female students have a higher chance of admission into the university. Access to the university is determined by possessing the required admission qualifications as set by the country's admission administrative entity (JAMB) and the university. The average age of members of the group was between 19 and 29 among the students and between 30 and 45 among the graduates.

This differentiation of age became a factor in the depth given to the questions. The graduates appeared to have a deeper knowledge about the educational system in general and in relation to how it used to be. They were also more cynical in their responses than the students. The students appeared to have more to say about their current experiences at the school. The students in the majority were more hopeful in their answers the younger they were, and more pessimistic the older they were. Also, the older they were, the less confidence they had that any improvement to the system was realistically possible, because, they did not have much faith in the government and the managers of the school on account of the ongoing state of corruption in the country and within the system.

The researcher devised the following explanatory mechanism to capture the responses and the discussions from the focus group for the sake of giving the responses better clarity and categorization. The responses were thus categorized into three groupings: (a) Conservatives (b)

Reformers and (c) Optimists. Here is a description of each response group within the focus group that came out as voices:

**(a) Conservatives:** The conservatives believed that the system was broken and needed a complete overhaul or change at the foundational level in order for the system to move forward. They were not hopeful that as it stood, the system met or was able to meet the expectations for which it was set up nor could it realize the goals of the national policy for education. They saw the older more elitist colonial education system as a benchmark for systemic stability and quality of graduates. They therefore preferred it as a better system. And this, without critiquing neither the colonial ethnocentrism of that old system for its lack of African centeredness nor the cultural dissonance within Africa that came out of that elitist colonial education system. The administrative framework of that colonial education system was very strict and very selective. Students who struggled in the system were left behind and the few who excelled moved on to join the elites of the society.

Most of their responses reflected a throw back to that older system and affirmed the active presence of that system within the present educational framework and practice in spite of shifts in the national policy on education including equity in access, to education by all citizens. However, there were some questions on which they agreed with the reformers and the optimists. For example, on the question of identifying the strengths of the system, they agreed with others that the greatest strength of the system was the large and eager-to-learn student population in the country.

**(b) The Reformers:** The reformers acknowledged that there was progress in some aspects of the educational system. They also, to some extent, acknowledged the past but wanted

the future. They strongly believed that changes were needed within the system as more needed to be done to make the system catch up and stabilize in its functions. In their responses, they often suggested what these changes were and in what direction the system needed to go. They did not believe that the system was completely broken nor needed change at the foundational level. They were accordingly, cautiously hopeful, that with proper attention, the system could rapidly improve and become stabilized in its functions and in line with the goals of the national policy on education.

**(c) Optimists:** The optimists believed that the system was adequate and things were acceptable as they stood. They did not believe that the system was broken nor needed much change and if change was needed, then such was more cosmetic than foundational. They disagreed mostly with the traditional voice and if at all, were closer to the reformers in their responses. This outlook was as the name suggested, very optimistic and in the judgment of the researcher, shallow. The researcher thinks that their optimistic responses had more to do with the naivety of the voice within the group, about the education system. In addition, it appeared that their youth informed their answers than agreement with documented facts and the reality of education on the ground. It also appeared that such answers lacked a clear understanding of the implications of the national policy on education in practice.

None of the three voices stayed strictly within the confines of a fixed category of responses. Depending on the question and the slant of the question, answers felled with a variety of the three categories. The implication here is that a participant's answers could be consistently reformist on the question of access to technology and conservative on the question of corruption within the system. The categorization is but an explanatory devise to capture and describe the voices of the members of the focus group and the answers they provided for the study.

### **Findings Focus Group Session I:**

The focus group as the heart of the study dug deeper to address the crisis within the education system in Nigeria. The focus group met at the University of Uyo (UNIYO). The goal of this first session was to capture the state of education in Nigeria in general from the collective experiences of the participants. The researcher used 13 questions to moderate the open discussion. The questions are stated below. The researcher for the sake of this group acted as a member participant or moderator, clarifying the questions as needed and asking for elaboration when answers or the contributions of the members were not clear.

As the discussions ensued, members of the group were excited to contribute their knowledge and explain their opinions to the group. The interaction was intense but genial. Any member of the group freely jumped in to contribute to the discussion; to agree, disagree or expand or add to the comments of others. The tone was energized, relaxed and friendly but focused. The researcher moved the questions and the discussion along. The first session lasted about one hour. Here are the results based on the interview questions:

#### **1. What do you think of the Nigerian education system as a whole?**

The conservatives thought that the system was on a clear path of collapse; not functioning well, lacking ideas and fast rotting away. They were accordingly pessimistic about the system as it stood and thought change was needed at the foundational level. The reformers thought the system was functional but very slow in its functions. They also thought it needed help especially technical assistance and updates in the infrastructure. They did not believe the system had completely collapsed but acknowledged that it was limping along and not optimal and so it needed help from the government. The optimists thought the system was a good system and did not need much at all. It appeared to the researcher that the optimists were too optimistic in their

answer on this question. For example, a simple observation of the campus showed that it was obviously overcrowded and needed more structures to ease the overcrowding in the lecture halls and in the hostels. The optimists seemed very enthusiastic being at university than understood the fuller nuances of the educational system; whereas the conservatives and the reformers seemed to understand better the nuances of the educational system.

## 2. What is working in the system?

While the conservatives were pessimistic and thought that nothing was working in the system. They however agreed with the reformers and the optimists on one point namely; the desire and eagerness of Nigerian students to learn as a constant that is working in the system. “Everybody embraces education” (UNIYO, 2011.) The reformers and the optimists in addition, thought that there were teachers who were conscientious and wanted to teach and that some do their best at teaching. However, even when the teachers were “working”, the education received was heavily theory based and not very practical.

The implication here is that even when the system worked, the product was not practical and viable in terms of preparing the graduates to enter into the work force ready to assume responsibility as professionals. This echoed the lack of adequate materials for practical demonstrations in laboratories and other related tools of learning that came up in related questions. It also echoed the inherited “grammar school” liberal arts modality of British education that did not emphasize the rigors of the sciences but focused on reading, writing and arithmetic. The education system has produced millions of graduates in Nigeria but most of these studied the arts and the humanities and not the sciences. The result has been a high number of university graduates but few among these are able to create much with what they learned. There was also a sense of a cultural respect for education and the educated and this appeared to be the

unseen hand driving the positive motivation for education and getting an education. This perhaps explained the pessimism of the conservatives as they saw the current state of education as lacking in the capacity to produce a respectable and practical education.

### 3. What is not working?

There was amazing unity among the conservatives, the reformers and the optimists on this question. Everyone was eager to jump in and point out what was not working or not working properly. As a group, they said that the system was structurally dysfunctional in terms of ideas, functions, characteristics and behaviors that produced system wide instability. It also produced students who were unsure that the system could do for them what it was supposed to do.

The group also believed that the ethical framework of the system was compromised by dishonesty and insincerity. Such included; unchecked fraudulent activities, like examination malpractices, certificate forgeries, and other unchecked abuses by teachers and professors who sold examination questions and grades for a fee. Other activities included unchecked gang activities on campus that created an ever present sense of insecurity for the students and teachers.

They pointed to the dearth of educational technologies like computers and Internet access and the lack laboratory materials to learn academic demonstrations as major areas of deficiency. It was their belief that it was a great disadvantage to them to go through university in the 21<sup>st</sup> century without access to 21<sup>st</sup> century tools of learning. They said that it gave them a negative competitive edge in the work place and inadequacy in a competitive global market place. To the researcher, this posture appears to affirm the idea that the present system still lacks the tools to make the study of science and technology what it ought to be, namely, a practical endeavor. The implication here is that after say four years of university education, the graduates will be awarded degrees in fields that they are ill prepared to succeed in. This below par educational

preparation regimen in the long run will negatively affect the development of the science and technology base of a developing Nigerian society.

The conservatives also pointed out that bad government policies negatively affected school operations (the allusion here is to funding) and were out of sync with reality on campuses resulting in labor strikes by the teaching and non-teaching staff. For years, the government did not adjust salaries to match inflation. For instance, in 1991, the dollar was about 1 to 7 naira. In 2011, the same dollar is about 1 to about 150 naira. The disparity created economic hardships for those in the education field that the government did not address. Labor disputes ensued. Such labor disputes often led to school closures and truncated semesters that have affected quality systemic development and student outcomes for years. The reformers pointed out that the system was not paying sufficient attention to the needs of students in terms of the quality of student life on campus. This has created conditions that made it conducive for gangs to develop and thrive on campuses creating a state of insecurity among other related maladies.

Again, there was little or no disagreement between the three voices on this question as the education system is indeed in crisis. Whatever disagreement existed had more to do with the extent of the dysfunction within the system, than whether there was dysfunction within the system. Even the optimists agreed with the areas pointed out by the others in the full group which affirmed that the system is deficient in many and various ways. All therefore agreed that their education made them 'book smart' while they lacked the practical dimensions of learning in a modern global society. This supported what was said earlier in question two that the slant of the educating process was slanted disproportionally towards the liberal arts modality than the science and technology modality that built industries and created jobs.



Here again, the conservatives chimed in and pointed out that the system was better in the 1970s during the oil boom. At that time, adequate funding was made available by the government for schools; and teachers within the system then had more loyalty to the profession. There was also greater confidence in the system. The researcher who grew up in that 1970s' system in the same country affirmed that assessment to be true to the facts. In comparison to 2011, the conservatives said that a majority of students in the system lacked confidence in themselves. They also stated that student assessment in the feeder schools (senior secondary schools) was unreliable and thus negatively affected the quality of students entering university in terms of their preparedness.

In addition, all voices agreed that there was too much emphasis on paper qualification in admissions and in the job place which may explain some of the ethical abuses within the system as many have sought to acquire paper qualifications while quality has suffered.

#### 4. How was education in the past years: pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial and during the latter military regimes?

A significant amount of time was spent to explain this question. The researcher explained pre-colonial to mean before colonialism. Pre-colonial also encompassed the African traditional education system that provided traditional orientation to the young and socialization to the society or the tribe. Colonial, meant specifically the formal education devised and set up by the British colonial enterprise and its collaborators in Africa (1885 – 1960). 1885 marks the formal “scramble for Africa” and the Berlin conference that formally divided the continent up among Europeans powers. Post-colonial meant the formal educational system in place after independence on October 1, 1960 up to 1982. Latter military regimes, referred to the period 1983

to 1999 during which time, the military ruled Nigeria with a tyrannical grip on power. It was this period that saw the greatest defunding of education and closures of schools by the military. A civilian government was voted into power in 1999 and things very slowly began to change.

The knowledge of the historical record was scanty at best or non-existent at worst among the reformers and the optimists. The university graduates in the group were more knowledgeable about the historical record, perhaps, in the estimation of the researcher, on account of their age (30-45 years old).

The conservatives separated pre-colonial education as an entirely different system from colonial and post-colonial systems. They saw pre-colonial education as informal education or cultural education. They said that this system was part of traditional Africa and socio-cultural orientation that became a victim of British colonialism as power shifted from the traditional systems of social organization to the institutions of the colonial enterprise. Pre-colonial education was then relegated to a state of irrelevance within the schema of the newly introduced formal education. They acknowledged that it did not die out but has continued without the vibrancy of its past. The reformers and the optimists did not have much to say about pre-colonial education. They appeared interested in the answers of the conservatives.

Continuing, the conservatives said that education was highly prized and valued during the colonial period (1885-1960) as there were very few schools and very limited access to advanced education. Education was very limited and education was also a new thing that granted a lot of new prestige plus access to economic resources and power. They acknowledged that the focus of this education was to serve the British interest and not necessarily African interests. Products of this education became the new leaders within the colonial enterprise and system and negatively affected the traditional institutions of learning and power and social organization.

Again, early post-colonial education (1960s and up - before radical military interventions in government beginning 1983) enjoyed about the same benefits as colonial education, talent was rewarded and certificates were earned through hard work and not bought. Though access to education was limited, it was however qualitative. They pointed to the University College, Ibadan, as a school that was on par with similar universities worldwide but now is no more. (The University College Ibadan was founded in --- and produced the top scholars, and brains in industry that helped to build the nascent nation Nigeria at independence in 1960. It could be compared to the prestige that Harvard or Yale universities have in the United States as premier universities.)

According to the conservatives, those who earned degrees or certificates could defend such if challenged as they had the knowledge and the training to do so. They also believed that the post-colonial system began to increasingly lose standards after the 1970s because of underfunding and related issues. It became increasingly unstable in the mid-1980s as successive military governments forcefully took over power and ignored the education sector. The military often unilaterally shut down schools for fear of the youth and in addition persecuted the educated class for criticizing the military regimes.

During this period many of the educated class left the country and went overseas causing a brain drain effect that has continued to affect the quantity and quality of trained experts and personnel in education and industries in Nigeria. (Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian Nobel Laureate in Literature fled the country in the 1990s after being sought by the military government for treason).

The military government also began legitimizing fraud and corruption even in the education sector (this was an uncommon malfeasance that now became common). They also

destabilized the education sector by reducing funding and interfering with the system through direct political appointments to academic positions instead of merit promotions. The conservatives placed the blame for the crisis in Nigerian education squarely on military intervention that the accompanying instability in the Nigerian polity and economy.

The posture of the conservatives on this question perhaps explained why, perhaps, they believed so strongly that the system of education in Nigeria had collapsed. Their point of reference is obviously anchored in a different past from the reformers and optimists. The reformers and the optimists pointed out that the basic structures were always there to provide basic education even during the challenging periods. They also agreed largely with the analysis of the conservatives.

The researcher mostly agreed also with the analysis of the conservatives. However, the conservatives appeared not to see the dissonance or the effects of the dissonance caused by the cultural disconnect between the colonial educational framework (that they admired for being stable) and the post-colonial crisis in African education. For instance, though the NPE seeks to place Africa at the center and not at the periphery of the education process there has remained a continuing dissonance between enunciated policy and the practice of such policy.

The majority of the conservatives, reformers and the optimists were unable to see any associations or relationships between the colonial and the post-colonial systems in relation to the foundational crisis in the current system. The researcher saw this as perhaps evidence, that the colonial modality of education was buried so deeply within the inherited system, that graduates of the current system actually see the dissonant colonial system as still desirable.

5. When did the change in the system begin for the better?

The conservatives believed that there was no positive change in the system. They again pointed to the post-colonial education system before the 1980s as better. They said that had the system been left that way without interference then the current crisis could have been avoided while the system would have seen positive growth and improvement. They pointed to the de-boarding of secondary schools in 1981/82 as a point when the system shifted negatively in standards because the system lost its “formative capacity. (Boarding schools and the boarding process were seen as a training modality for the “learned elite” and the students that came out of it picked up the social graces of the West in addition to an assumed higher discipline. The researcher attended a boarding school all through secondary school. The father of the researcher was a boarding master at a high school and the researcher lived with his father while the father supervised the boarding program in the 1970s.) After the 1980s, most students began attending school as day students. It appeared the conservatives desired this older system as the ideal and so saw changes in the system negatively.

The Reformers saw a reference point for improvement in the system as initiated during the return to civilian rule beginning 1999-through 2011 and continuing. Changes has included but not limited to increased pay and better conditions of service for teachers and increased funding for school. For them, improved conditions of service for teachers have translated to increased quality of education in the classroom. They also added, that the 1990s began a process when many in the population wanted academic degrees (paper qualification) by all means for the few available and highly competitive jobs as the economy had collapsed under military leadership. They pointed to this as one of the issues that created the conditions for the unethical abuses that have negatively changed the system for the worse reducing confidence in the system.

The optimists affirmed that there was positive change in the system. For example, they pointing out that a graduate from UNIYO (the University where the focus group met) was one of the best college graduates in the entire country in 2008. It is instructive that most of the changes in the system appeared to be improvement from negative conditions with limited mention of positive change. This appeared to affirm that indeed the system was in crisis.

#### 6. How is the system now?

The respondents as a group treated this question more like a spot check of the system in the year 2011 when the interview was conducted. The conservatives thought there was complete rot in public schools. For them, the system lacked the necessary and adequate supervision, creating gaps in the administrative process thus making the system unreliable. Unspoken here was a reference that there was a difference in the private schools as such schools have the required and expected qualities including adequate funding and manpower capacity (and accordingly very costly to attend).

The Reformers were of the opinion that the system overall was improving though rather slowly and that the performance was average across board and so the system needed greater improvement. The optimists' position was that the system was working and demanding. This position interesting appeared to be in line with the youthfulness of the respondents earlier mentioned, as it deferred so much from the positions of the conservatives and the reformers.

#### 7. Are you hopeful about where the system is heading?

The conservatives were not hopeful at all about the future of the system and said that the system was headed to doom and certain collapse “unless a state of emergency was called on the entire education sector” (UNIYO, 2011). The reformers were cautiously hopeful and mostly unsure

and uncertain of the future of the system. They affirmed that the system was limping along. They also said that with the injection of adequate funding and a correction of the corruption within the system, rapid improvement will then straighten the system out. The optimists were most hopeful about the future of the system. They believed that the limited technology available in the system was a pointer to better days in the future.

8. Is the Nigerian educational system capable of producing workers for the 21<sup>st</sup> century digital workforce?

The conservatives said that this was in doubt as things stood. They pointed out that only a negligible percentage of the student population had access to 21<sup>st</sup> century technology as an embedded form of learning. And even with that, they pointed to the absence of 24 hour electricity as a major handicap that negatively affected the digital evolution of the learning community in Nigeria.

The Reformers pointed to the recently privatized communications industry as their example to say that they were hopeful that the system was capable of producing workers for the 21<sup>st</sup> century digital workforce. (The number of telephone lines in Nigeria increased from 400,000 to 70 million within 10 years. This led to an investment of about \$16 billion in the telecommunication sector and related massive employment (Hassan, 2010)). They added the caveat that more investment in the education sector was needed to create the enabling environment to ramp up a 21<sup>st</sup> century work force. They however still saw such workforce as a dream that was realizable in Nigeria but not immediately.

The optimists believed that yes; the system was capable of producing workers for the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce. They believed that digital technology was in Nigeria to stay and through the

formal and informal educational systems, Nigeria as a whole was learning and adapting to technology and will surely produce the workforce as the society evolved technologically.

Nigeria has continued to suffer from unsteady electric power since independence and the country is not yet fully connected to the national grid. The grid is also centrally controlled by an inefficient federal bureaucracy that has failed to produce steady electric power for the country. Privately owned gas and diesel generators provide the major source of power in schools. Limited funding in education implies limited availability of generator produced electricity. The implication here is that limited electricity is disruptive to institutional functionality and negatively affects the learning process.

Digital technology and wireless cell phones have rapidly connected the country in the last ten years than was done since the British introduced telephone and telegraph lines in the early 1900s. The new technology has also broken the stratification lines between the elite class and the rest of the country. Before cell phones became common, only the government, the elite and the rich had access to wired communication. Today both the poor and the rich have access to wireless phones radically changing communication within the country and therefore the speed of business. According to Hassan (2010) the cost of a telephone line has dropped 99%. The researcher is hopeful that if such radical policy engineering is introduced and sustained in the education sector, a similar improvement may follow.

#### 9. What is needed in the Nigerian education system and why?

There was general agreement among the conservatives, the reformers and the optimists that the system had many and varying areas of needs. The difference had more to do with the degree of the need than whether the system had needs. The conservatives thought there was a need for a



complete re-visioning of the entire system to produce qualitative education to fit with the present needs of the society for education. They also said that the system as it stood was like a broken foundation and no matter what was added, the foundation was still irrevocably broken. For them the systemic overhaul included; systemic policy framework review to correct what was archaic and redundant including aspects of the inherited colonial liberal arts framework. Other areas included; the hiring of more and better trained teachers to meet the increased student population, redesigning the curriculum – making it intentionally relevant to present day needs, better supervision of teachers and students and finally adequate and steady funding to pay for it all.

The reformers agreed with them and added; infrastructural overhaul including; modern laboratories, libraries, and educational technologies as areas needing improvement. The optimists also agreed with the others and added the following areas of need: better care for students and teachers in addition to the restoration of an ethical atmosphere within the system to engender confidence in the system.

These varied responses include: improvement in science, to catch up with the rest of the world in science and better research laboratories to enhance learning. And in addition, Internet facilities to give ready access to information and help students and Nigeria to bridge the digital divide internally within the country and the world at large.

The entire group as one, pointed to funding and maladministration of the institutions from the government to the local administrators as the major areas that needed immediate action. According to them, changes in these two areas will have a cascading effect on the other areas to correct the years of neglect by government and administrators that led to abuses within the system.

10. Identify the major areas of strength in the system today (2011)?

There was broad agreement amongst all that Nigeria's population at 158 million (World Bank 2011) and a large student population that was eager to learn was the major area of strength. The conservatives identified the creation of a second National Examination Council (NECO) to manage external examinations along with the pre-existing West African Examination Council (WAEC) as a key capacity improvement and strength. They pointed out that this has assisted in offering more examination opportunities to the millions of secondary school graduates and others eager to pass the requirement exams required before the university entry exam managed by the Joint Matriculation and Admissions Board (JAMB). There are millions waiting to enter university in Nigeria as the admission rate is adversely low year after year. Only about 4.5 % are admitted yearly from about a million applications (Nigeria Bureau of Statistics, 2008). NECO therefore is like having an alternative examination to the SATs in the United States as an option for college entry.

The reformers pointed out that government's positive response to the Niger Delta problems has brought relative peace to the region that now has a positive effect on education. The problem is a reactive violence including kidnappings and bombings of petroleum infrastructures in the Niger Delta. This violence had halted normal life in the region for a long time, (1990s through early 2000s and intermittently thereafter). They fight because of the injustices suffered by the oil producing communities who have gotten very little from the petroleum from their land while suffering all the environmental pollution from oil exploration. The impact of this resource driven violence has affected many sectors of the Nigerian polity including education. However, further enquiry lays outside the limits of this present research.

The Optimists pointed to fewer exam malpractices as an example of the system's ability to change and therefore an area of strength. The researcher felt that the group appeared to see the human capacity within the education system as the real strength but dormant and felt that with adequate funding this strength would then become fully manifest turning the system around for the better.

#### 11. What is the future of the Nigerian educational system?

The conservatives did not see a promising future but a bleak one unless there were dramatic changes within the system. They insisted that for the system to have a future, it needed to change the present colonial grammar education system that emphasized the liberal arts for a more hands on approach that enabled students to build things. And this, in addition to a redesigned curriculum content that brings out skills in the students. Such changes will make the students self-reliant and their education relevant to the society. Only then will the future of the Nigerian education system become bright.

The reformers took a positive view of the system and were cautiously hopeful for the future, pointing out that continuous improvement was still needed or the system would become a total failure. The optimists were enthusiastic that the future looked good all around. They believed that the system was going to beat all other educational systems in the world because of the enormous seriousness in the Nigerian students and teachers.

It is important to note that the answers provided by the focus group at UNIYO would hopefully apply across Nigeria and is reflective of the situation in Nigerian education as a whole.

### **Findings Focus Group at (UNIYO) Session II:**

Session II of the interview focused more precisely on the participants educational experiences in a particular region of the country that captured a good sample of the general population. UNIYO is located in Akwa Ibom State which in turn is located in the South South(one of six geo-political zones in Nigeria) region of Nigeria (used to be part of the Eastern Region of Nigeria). In this section, “majority” is used to mean “simple majority” of at least 6 out of 11 participants in the focus group. “Minority” is used in a similar sense – “simple minority” of at most 1-5 out of 11. Particular responses that do not fit into the simple majority/minority are identified individually as such. This section of the interview was much lighter in mood in comparison to the first section. The students were eager to talk about what they thought of the system as they experienced it.

#### **1. What do you think of the University of Uyo (UNIYO) educational system?**

All respondents said UNIYO in spite of all its needs has a good educational system. UNIYO is the premier university in the state. It is also a Federal University receiving federal funding but began life as a Teacher Training College, College of Education, State University and presently a Federal University. These transitions have implications spanning external and internal structures around campus in terms of adequacy of structures and relevance to the current mission of the school as a full research university. The buildings and structures on campus are yet to match the current evolution of the university as a research university as it was not originally built for such. They thought that students get a good education at the school.

#### **2. What is working at your university?**

The respondents in the majority approved the work done by lecturers while also pointing out that the students are eager to learn. They believed that the lecturers in spite of labor disagreements with the government are nonetheless very good teachers. One respondent added that there is peace now on campus creating a better state of security. This is significant. Most of the 1990s and 2000s were marked by “cultist” (gang) violence on campus creating a breakdown of security guarantees on campus that affected all aspects of school life. This is significantly reduced but the risk of violence is not completely over as most of the activities went underground or moved off campus.

3. What is not working at your university?

The majority pointed to the following as what is not working: low teaching standards, ill equipped libraries and laboratories, technology especially limited Internet access. Others included the residual threat of gang activities on campus, the lack of a proactive students’ affairs funded structure and bad government policies that negatively affect the educational system which include labor disputes and school closures because of labor strikes. One pointed out that academically, it’s almost okay.

4. How was it before at your university before the return to civilian rule 1999?

The majority said it was really structurally dysfunctional and corrupt as the structures were not functional as universities as a whole, ought to be institutions of higher learning and with high standards.

5. What has changed and when did meaningful improvement begin?

The majority pointed out that order had mostly broken down in the school as a result of several factors including; inadequate funding, maladministration, dilapidated buildings, overcrowding, open malpractices in exams by both students and faculty and insecurity because of cultism and

related violence. The key change was in the change of the poor management of the school. The majority believed that real changes began about 2007 with changes to the management structure that implemented policies and higher supervision that began to rebuild confidence in the system. Students were reengaged in their school through a “peace and campus initiative” program. This brought an end to the “cult wars” restoring peace on campus. Cult (gang) violence among competing groups created massive insecurity on campus with collateral damage to innocent students. Many students were killed by other students. They made the night unsafe especially for female students. Even professors were intimidated into not giving failing grades to the gang members. These gangs were originally legitimate university fraternities that went cultic and criminal in time employing violence and pseudo-religious intimidation to advance a take-over of campus life. One said there was very little change on campus.

6. How are the conditions now at your university?

The answers to this question varied. The majority saw the overall performance of the university as improving but average, ranging from low average to high average. One acknowledged that the primary-secondary feeder system is now more stable, due to the technological advancements in the state and the implemented free and compulsory education in the state. The group also acknowledged however that the university system was not feeling the funding benefits that the primary-secondary was presently enjoying with the fully paid free education at the level.

7. Where is the future of the educational system at your university?

The majority of the group was hopeful and believed that the university is headed in the right direction. One believed that it is headed to a more computerized and digitized system of educating as this is the future to make it competitive with other schools.

8. Is the Akwa Ibom educational system (9-3-4 system) capable of producing workers for the 21<sup>st</sup> century digital workforce?

The majority was partially hopeful and pointed to the fact that the students overall at all levels are not yet positively exposed to a digital education at global standards. On the other hand they were hopeful that with adequate funding and investment in educational technologies, the students, because they are eager to learn, should be able to compete globally. The minority believed the system will not be able to compete as the promised technologies are not yet available for use on campus. They will believe when they see it.

9. What is needed in the Akwa Ibom educational system?

The answers for this question were mixed. The overall point was that the system needed to give more care and attention to the educational delivery mechanics and machinery to optimize the learning experience. One point of note was the majority belief that a spirit of patriotism was needed in the management of the education sector as education goes beyond the needs of any particular official but the entire society. Another member pointed out that there should be an enormous book and awareness workshop for all students and staff. This was a reaction to the lack of academic counseling and guidance services on campus creating a situation whereby a freshman is dropped into the system and has to navigate the system without a guide except upper classmen who themselves had no guides. Another issue that stood out was that the students wanted a worthwhile educational experience that had modern tools to guarantee quality. For them, adequate funding was the key to guaranteeing the experience.

10. Identify the major areas of need for the system and why?

This question enjoyed the longest responses and the needs areas were equally diverse. The majority identified access to technology and information through well-equipped research libraries as a primary area of need. The second area for the majority was the hiring of adequate faculty to reduce class sizes. The third area raised was equipping the laboratories for the sciences and other related disciplines so that the faculty and students could practice what they have learned. Next was infrastructural and environmental needs including: modern classrooms with technology, faculty offices for faculty-student interactions, adequate hostels (dormitories) for conducive living quarters, sports programs and facilities for recreation and health and campus security for safety. The social needs included a program of ethics to rebuild confidence in the system and the learning process for both students and staff and addition to proper staff and student welfare programs so as to build a positive learning atmosphere.

11. Identify the major areas of strength?

The majority agreed that the primary area of strength is that Akwa Ibom State is more educationally inclined with a long tradition of educating the young and also, the students themselves are very eager to learn. They pointed to a backlog of students waiting to get into university on account of the free education program at the primary and secondary levels as a capacity strength. The majority also pointed to government direct involvement in education as a strength - the Ministry of Education has helped to check the total and overall performance of students studying in the state; there is veritable improvement on the individual student and within the system itself. The minority pointed to lecturers and teachers as positive collaborators in the learning process.



## 12. What is the future of the Akwa Ibom educational system?

The majority had a very positive view of the future of education in the state and some believed that with continuous funding, it will surely be able to compete with other nations. They pointed out that the state is already one of the most educationally advanced states in the Nigerian Federation. One was unsure of the future as all the promises of the government on improving the system are yet to be fully implemented on the ground.

### **Overview on the findings of the other groups; b, c, and d:**

The findings from groups b,c, and d, helped with triangulating the findings from the Focus group. It provided more light on the investigation to understanding the foundational framework of the Nigerian educational system, the crisis within the system while offering their insight to a way forward. As noted earlier, discussion questions for groups outside the Focus Group also followed the axis of the research questions from chapter one and the interview questions for the focus group.

It should also be noted that the categorization and explanatory devise earlier employed for the focus group to capture their responses is not used in the analysis here. The nature of the interaction with these groups did not allow for such differentiation. However, loosely framed, the students were mostly optimists, the teachers and principals were mostly reformers and the commissioner was a composite of all three voices.

The process was interactive in nature. The researcher fielded questions and gave clarifications as the discussions evolved. While interviewing school administration and the Commissioner for Education, the researcher referenced some of what the students had said for

their comments. In the findings below, there are cross references to such comments and responses. Following are the findings and analyses.

### **Group (b) Findings: Secondary School Students**

They students were very enthusiastic being in school. They appeared focused and eager to learn while the researcher observed them in class. In their answers to questions for the study, the students did not appear to have depth in their understanding of the historical questions (pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial) or the implications of the past history on educational policy in the present day. The traditional culture generally does not teach children to question authority. This may perhaps explain why they do not appear to question what authorities tell them or teach them. They appeared to be more of passive receivers of the education given to them by their schools with very limited critique. Also, the structure of the historical grammar schools, set up by the colonial government, is still inherent in present day schools and came across in their answers. The colonial educational system did not leave room for questioning authority as the empire needed people to obey, so as to maintain the colonial order, oppressive or not (Sifuna, 2000).

The students believed the system of education is working for them and this is because at the local level, Akwa Ibom State, where their schools are located, has a free education program and has generated a lot of interest in primary-secondary education. In the past six years, during the administration of the current governor of the State, Chief Godswill O. Akpabio, something of a revolution has taken place in education in the state. This free education has offered them more opportunities than was available during the military regimes and other governments.

The researcher noticed that the student capacity at the schools were past their maximum on account of a reawakened interest in secondary education. Also, there were many older students in the upper secondary levels. When the researcher asked some of the older students, why they started school late, they said their parents or guardians could not afford the tuition when secondary school had fees. They also said that when education became free, they came back to school to complete high school despite their age. The researcher had observed students, who appeared to be in their early twenties, ages, older than the norm which is between fifteen and eighteen.

Further enquiries from administration confirmed that most of the older upper secondary students were students who had dropped out on account of cost of education and who have now returned to school. Others were motivated to be in school by the local culture that encourages children to please their parents and mostly do what they were told. On the other hand, all were educationally ambitious with very clear goals in terms of what they wanted to study at the university and what they wanted to become in the future.

The majority of the students wanted to study professional courses, the largest majority wanted to study engineering. The researcher thought that the presence of oil in the region and the attractive salaries that the oil companies pay, have perhaps robbed off on the local population, increasing the number of students who wanted to study engineering. Asked whether they had confidence in the education they received at the school, the majority said yes. The minority that said no was on account of the lack of facilities for them to complete a more studious regimen.

The majority pointed out that they needed more study space in school: more classrooms, libraries and books, better equipped labs and more teachers, so they could have smaller classes.

The teacher to student ratio at the private school was about 1:20, and at the federal government school, 1: 40 and at the public high school 1 :> 50. When the researcher presented the numbers to the Commissioner for education, he apparently already knew already. He explained that the population of the students in his high schools had doubled since the state government declared education free. He also said that there were plans to increase the number of teachers hired to reduce class size. The students were enthusiastically hopeful for the future of education in Nigeria.

Though all the schools had some form of computer technology and computer laps, there was the constant issue of absent electricity to use the equipment. Most of the equipment were donated to the schools by businesses and/or government. The lack of adequate use of these equipment appeared to the researcher as wasteful. Neither the students benefitted from them nor did the teachers for their professional development. Further enquiry showed that like other schools and institutions in the area, these schools were also dependent on diesel or petrol powered generators for electricity. Such use of electricity is limited because of the cost of fuel. This is insightful in terms of education. The lack of steady electricity in the country has a silent impact on learning opportunities at all school levels especially in the sciences for obvious reasons.

There was no major difference between the state school and the federal government school as both were fully funded and tuition free. However, there was a difference with the private secondary school. The tuition was obviously much higher but this was also matched by smaller classes and more attention and care for the students. They also had access to better technology all round.

At all three schools, the students were surprisingly aware that technology was the way of the future. They thus wanted more technology in their schools especially in the classrooms. They felt, they needed to be familiar with technology. They also wanted smaller classes. They believed their teachers were well trained. They therefore had confidence that their teachers were capable of teaching them what they needed to know to be adequately prepared to pass their external exams en-route to university.

However, the Commissioner of Education said that only 18% of high school graduates actually continue onto university in the state. The key reason was lack of space at the universities to absorb them and a lack of options in post-secondary technical or vocational schools. He blamed the situation on the conventional liberal arts education that is prevalent in the state and in the country. It was a surprise to the researcher that there was no significant difference in the answers given between students from all three schools though there was a difference in terms of the facilities available to the students in the private school.

#### **Group (c) (i): Teachers and Administrators:**

This group was aware of the historical heritage of the colonial educational system that produced the grammar school-liberal arts nature of Nigerian education and the elitism that was attached to it. They believed that it was the elitist nature of that inherited system that prized being a university graduate higher than what the graduate studied in university or if the graduate was proficient in the learned discipline. They also believed that the educational system of the past (i.e. early post-colonial 1960-1980) was better as it had more structure and discipline and graduates could defend (back up) their diplomas or certificates. They also pointed out that

colonial and early post-colonial education was not a thing of the masses but the select few which made it more prestigious.

According to them, the quality in the educational system began to atrophy in the early 1980s. They believed as a group that the current system is unstable as a result of several factors. These included but were not limited to past under funding, over population of the schools (creating problems of understaffing), inadequate classroom space, under-equipped labs and libraries. These conditions have directly and negatively impacted the quality of what the teachers can do.

Other issues not working in the system included absence of modern and adequate educational technologies and professional development for teachers to catch up with changes in new teaching methodologies. According to the teachers and administration, the present government is late in trying to catch up especially in infrastructural updating and maintenance. There was no significant maintenance of or updating of fixed structures for years leading to demoralizing decay and dilapidated buildings all over schools the country. For them catching up is a long term process.

They blamed the military governments (especially those in power 1983-1999) for paying lip service to the National Policies for Education as promulgated by the various governments since independence. They also blamed the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) of the IMF for helping destroy the educational system built up in the 1960-1970s. The teachers and administration said that secondary education was stable and rapidly growing after independence in 1960. In the 1970's it broadly expanded and was also fully funded on account of the oil boom of the 1970s. When the oil boom collapsed in the mid 1980s, education funding suffered

massively. And under the military it got really worse as the local currency was devalued in the 1980s at the behest of the IMF driven SAP. The economy collapsed and education suffered as money was relocated to other priorities.

Many good teachers left teaching during this period in search of alternate employment. This led to understaffing problems. According to the group, the government still, has not fully staffed the schools since the late 1980s through the 2000s. This has affected several generations of students and negatively affected school morale and the quality of education passed on. They also pointed to other internal pressures like corruption and the pressure for paper qualification instead of skills as contributing to the falling standards of education. They pointed out that most teachers feel that their jobs are more of a vocation (a calling) than a career and so are committed. They however feel handicapped by the government's historical mismanagement of the system. Nigeria has a top down centralized educational system with very limited local autonomy across the country.

They accepted that there was low teacher morale which they blamed on teachers being owed the meager salaries they are paid for months on end. According to the group, because there was no adjustment for inflation on teacher salaries for years, teachers began to engage in other jobs to make ends meet. The result of losing the teachers' full attention on teaching, they said, resulted in lower teacher output and attention to student needs. They believed that teachers' divided energies on account of low pay in turn negatively affected student outcomes especially in the external exams.

According to the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, out of millions of students that sit for the external exit exam yearly in secondary school, the average pass rate is 20%. This low pass rate

and the general corruption in the society led to exam malpractices. In some cases teachers got involved for pay in helping students cheat during external exams. They saw the future of education positively when the appropriate changes and funding have been fully rolled out by government and the appropriate authorities.

They believed that their students could compete with others around the world. With adequate modern teaching tools to teach with and the prerequisite professional development they had confidence they could produce students who could compete globally. However, they believed that it will take a few more years before the system catches up for the years when the system was abandoned by the government. The researcher found the teachers to be well trained and capable but handicapped by years of limited funding and the visible effects of such on structures, morale and the quality of education as measured by student outcomes. As mentioned earlier, in the passing out external examination taken at the end of secondary education, about 80% of the students do not pass (Federal Government of Nigeria 2008). This is a very high number and the reason may have to do with the dysfunction within the system.

**(c) (ii) Principals:** All three principals were in agreement with the conclusions of their teachers and pointed to funding as the greatest challenge to their success as key administrators. They were all knowledgeable about the colonial heritage of the Nigerian educational framework and how this has negatively affected the foundational formulations of Nigeria's educational policies over the years since independence in 1960. They felt frustrated because they knew what to do to initiate positive change at the school level to match education policy to practice. Their frustration is based off being continuously handicapped by government bureaucracies either at



the state level or at the federal levels. As mentioned earlier, Nigeria has a top down centralized education system that leaves very little or no room for local input.

They blamed low morale among their teachers not as a result of a lack of technical skills or capacities in teaching but on low wages. They believed they needed education reform especially in the curriculum so they could excise unnecessary and irrelevant materials from what is actually taught in their schools. They will also like to excise the inherited and archaic aspects of the colonial education heritage that still remain on the text books or practice.

They felt they do not have a free hand in hiring and firing as administration is centrally controlled. They believed that the Nigerian educational framework is not working within the parameters of the Nigerian Policy on Education as the funding has not been there to match the demands of policy to practice. They acknowledged the current free education program and the current funding levels as positive change but pointed out that the positive changes are too new to make up years of under-funding and bad policies. They agreed with their teachers that sustained change was a long term endeavor.

All three principals hold advanced degrees. One was a former Commissioner of Education. She was trained in Nigeria and the United Kingdom and was well versed in what education ought to be. She believed the Nigerian educational framework in theory and practice still needed to harmonize for systemic coherence. She also believed that for Nigeria to truly advance and develop, it needed to evolve a truly Nigerian philosophy of education different from the inherited colonial system and framework. She pointed out that due to various reasons including ignorance; most Nigerians still believed that the inherited colonial system was better than the educational system today.

It appears from interviewing the principals that all had great professional experience and knowledge of their jobs. They were also the most knowledgeable about the pre-colonial, the colonial and the post-colonial factors that continue to affect modern day educational formulation and practice in Nigeria. They all had a great appreciation for the problems within the Nigerian education system. The principals believed that had the government truly and fully funded Nigeria's stated goals for education in the national policy, Nigerian education would have been on par with other comparable countries. As this has not been the case, Nigerian educators in the past fifty years since independence have been handicapped in delivering the education needed for Nigeria's development. They as a group had confidence in their teachers and saw them as fully committed to teaching to make a difference. Their hope for an improved education system hinged on sustained funding by the government.

**Group (d): Government Official: Commissioner for Education, Akwa Ibom State**

This study further sought to understand the role played the government in advancing its education goals. The Commissioner for Education is the highest ranking education officer at the state level with the Minister of education being the equivalent at the federal level. The Commissioner affirmed problems within the system as pointed out by others. He pointed to the free education implemented by his state government (Akwa Ibom) as a step in the right direction. For him, free education is the great equalizer that engenders government push for equality, equity of access and gender equity for women.

He also believed that government abandonment of fully funding education in the past has contributed immensely to many of the problems experienced by the system presently. He

affirmed that in the state of Akwa Ibom, education (primary/secondary) is fully funded by the present state government. He pointed out to changes and developments in the education sector in the state. The researcher was made aware of photographs taken before and after for many of the rehabilitated school buildings. There were also some newly constructed class room blocks across the entire state. Nearly all the public schools across the entire state of Akwa Ibom have directly experienced positive changes in the learning environments of their schools. According to the commissioner, this was as a result of the prioritization of education by the present government in Akwa Ibom State.

This researcher affirmed the changes and developments referenced by the commissioner when the researcher visited the schools. The researcher saw the newly built structures and the presence of new technologies among other improvements; however some of these were not in use as mentioned earlier as there was no electricity.

The commissioner confirmed that because the student population in Akwa Ibom has risen from about 300,000 to about 600,000 in a few years (on account of the free education policy in the state), the government is struggling to ramp up manpower and other resources in order to meet the demands created by the free education in the state. The Commissioner believed that in spite of the challenges caused by the increasing number of students in the system there was no turning back on the free education policy as such was now enshrined by law. There was no lack of governmental will to follow through, all that is needed was time for the government plans and changes to fully become implemented and thus become manifest. He was thus very enthusiastically hopeful for education in Akwa Ibom State as a microcosm of Nigeria. As changes come into place one at a time, he believed the system was changing for the better. He

believed also that Nigeria has the capacity to produce students that should be able to compete in a digital 21<sup>st</sup> century society.

The researcher notes that the commissioner appeared knowledgeable about the historical education formulation in the country and how such has affected practice. According to him only 18% of high school graduates in the state enter the university or other tertiary institutions which leaves behind hundreds of thousands without marketable job skills or formal alternative educational routes after high school. He blamed this on the inherited colonial educational framework that has cranked out students from schools without giving them real world job skills. He also pointed out that unlike countries like the United States; Nigeria did not have adequate and legitimate middle skills and middle management institutions to capture the massive number of students graduating from High school.

He believed that the Nigerian society has bought too deeply into the elitism of attaining a university education no matter in what discipline without equal focus on what you do with the degree after completion. He saw the focus on paper qualifications within the employment sector and within the society in general as bad for Nigerian education and the developmental thrust of the national policy for education. The drive for paper qualification as a tool for upward mobility, social and economic, showed how deeply ingrained in the collective consciousness of the country is the colonial framework that rewarded “certification”. To be “educated” or “learned” was still more important than to be able to create or produce things with your hands. And this situation continues to persist, in spite of such framework not meeting the needs of the current Nigerian society on the practical and developmental planes.

He positioned himself as a chief education administrator as being among those in the nation who are cognizant of Nigeria's education policy within the context of the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial dynamics. He surprisingly confirmed that there was indeed a cultural dissonance between the colonial education framework and the African cultural society. For him that dissonance produced the elite class that taught several generations the colonial formulation of education. He saw that old system (liberal arts based) as having not produced a broad technical class within Nigeria with the expertise to meet the technical needs of Nigeria. And so, in spite of the number of educated Nigerians, there remains a major gap within the professional expertise needed to grow and develop the Nigerian society. He believed that a major shift was needed in the formulation of a new educational policy and systemic structures for the current Nigeria society. He saw this shift as a key factor in solving the crisis within the Nigeria education system.

### **Summary**

This study employed the descriptive analytic methodology to examine the foundational framework of the Nigerian educational system. It also examined the crisis within the system. The study sought finally to make recommendations for a way forward. Four groups participated in the study answering questions based on the research questions and questions used for the focus group at UNIYO. In Chapter Five the summary of the study based on the analysis of the findings in Chapter Four will be presented with conclusions based on the research questions and the data from the study. It will show that the Nigerian education framework needs a paradigm shift in policy formulation, administration and curriculum. Finally Chapter Five will present recommendations and implications for further research.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations**

#### **Summary:**

This study is a descriptive analysis that investigated the foundational framework of the Nigerian educational system by examining the crisis in that system. The study further sought to make recommendations for a way of remedying the crisis.

The first chapter opened with an introduction to the issue; Nigerian education was in crisis. The statement of the problem was a catalyst for investigating the foundational issues behind the crisis. The study had seven research questions to guide the investigation. The significance of the study was based on the assumption that education is at the heart of developing Africa's largest country, Nigeria. The definition of terms presented definitions as employed in the study. The study was limited to Nigeria as a country in Africa and also limited to the period 1999-2010. The organization of the study presented the research in five chapters.

Chapter two presented the review of literature. This study reviewed Nigeria's educational framework through the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras. The study assumed that what was true in colonial Nigeria for instance, was also true in colonial Ghana because former colonial territories shared common colonial experiences. The researcher used Africa as the universe of reference and Nigeria as the focus. The researcher reviewed African historical and cultural matrix to ascertain if there was a relationship between the history, culture and education in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular and how they affected education. An overview of the education system in Nigeria, and the impact of socio-economic and political factors on education rounded out the literature review.

Chapter three presented the qualitative research methodology employed including; design, subjects, materials and procedures. Four groups participated in the study:

- a) Focus Group: made up of 8 University Students and 3 University Graduates
- b) Senior Secondary school students: 400 Senior Secondary School Students from three secondary schools (one state public, one federal public, one private)
- c) Teachers and Administrators: 48 High School Teachers and 3 Administrators (principals)
- d) Government Official: 1 Government Official - Commissioner of Education

The qualitative approach was exploratory, descriptive and explanatory in relation to the data and related investigation.

Chapter four presented the findings and the analysis of the findings using the methodology laid out in chapter three. The analysis allowed the researcher to explain events, beliefs, attitudes and/or policies that have shaped the nature of education in Nigeria.

Chapter five presented the summary of the study based on the analysis of the findings in chapter four and conclusions based on the research questions and the data from the study. It showed that the Nigerian education framework needs a paradigm shift in policy formulation, administration and curriculum. Finally, chapter five presented recommendations and implications for further research.

### **Conclusions:**

Seven research questions were central to the study and guided the interviews and discussions during the data gathering process. These questions have led to several conclusions.

#### **Research Questions and conclusions from the study:**

1. To what extent did an educational system exist in Nigeria before colonization?

The study showed that there was no nationwide pre-colonial formal educational system in place because Nigeria was organized along tribal lines and not as one nation. The education that existed had more to do with learning the skills needed for survival within the clan or tribe like farming, art work, weaving or iron smiting. This traditional education was informal and oral in nature and followed the apprenticeship model.

2. What was the intent and purpose of the British colonial education system?

The study showed that the intent and purpose of colonial education was to serve the colonial needs of Britain. It also showed that the welfare of Britain was at the center and the welfare of Nigeria at the periphery of colonial policy and implementation. The study further showed that colonial education was based on the grammar school model centered on the three Rs: 'Reading', 'wRiting' and 'aRithmetic'. This approach neither provided the quality nor the rigor of the education available in Europe. European education included emphasis on the sciences and technology needed for national development. Such emphasis on science was not part of or a priority in the colonizing enterprise.

The colonizing enterprise centered on political, economic and cultural domination of Africa and the funneling of the wealth back to Europe. Colonial education was therefore structured to facilitate that flow of wealth. It was not for the welfare of the natives or the



development of the native territories. Colonial education was a secondary variable at the service of the socio-economic and political interests of the colonizer and not the colonized.

3. To what extent is the inherited colonial education framework still active in Nigerian post-colonial education policy and practice?

The colonial educational framework centered on the grammar school model: reading, writing and arithmetic. This is the bedrock of a liberal arts education. This liberal arts model is still deeply ingrained in the current practice of education in Nigeria. The acquisition of technical skills does not enjoy the socio-political and economic support in Nigerian society that liberal arts education enjoys. There is a continuing dissonance within the practice of education between the colonial centered approach and the emerging African centered approach. This causes a continuing confusion in the Nigerian articulated philosophy of education.

The research further showed that the inherited colonial educational framework produces graduates for the global markets instead of the local market. There seems to be a relationship between the inherited system and the problem of brain drain whereby highly skilled Nigerians leave the country and succeed in the international markets because of the foreign based education they received. Employment and upward mobility are based on paper qualification, often without regard to the requisite acquisition of skills. The research showed that there were more graduates in the liberal arts or in fields that have little practical applications in Nigeria than in science and technology fields.

4. Is the Nigerian educational framework and system working within the parameters of the National Policy on Education?

The study showed that it is not working within the parameters of the NPE. Many factors have interfered with the ability of the education system to translate policy into action. Some of these factors include, but are not limited, to insufficient funding, government interference in education, corruption, and infrastructural decay, political and economic instability in Nigeria. There is a resultant dissonance between the written policy and the practice of education in the classroom. There have been too many challenges that have interfered with the ability of the policy to be put into practice in the classroom to meet the published goals of the NPE.

5. What is working in the Nigerian educational system and what is not working and what are the causes?

The study showed that the constant variable that is working in the system is the population of Nigeria and a corresponding large and eager to learn student population that continues to desire education. The system is broken financially, administratively, infrastructural and ethically. Massive infrastructural work is needed to bring classrooms, libraries, laboratories and related structures into the modern age. Government policy and administration of the policy is not working. The chief cause is inadequate funding. Other causes include a weak economy, a long period of military rule that ignored education, political instability, corruption within the system and society.

6. Is the Nigerian educational system competitive in a digital 21<sup>st</sup> century global society and are students and graduates of the system confident in the education they receive?

The study showed that though the Nigerian educational system has the potential capacity to compete in a digital 21<sup>st</sup> century global society, this capacity has yet to materialize in practice. Graduates are not very confident in the education they receive. The educational system is not, therefore, competitive though it has the raw capacity to be competitive.

7. Is there hope for the present educational system in Nigeria and is it sustainable considering poor management, negative socio-political and economic adversities?

The study showed that there is cautious hope in the system, but such hope is contingent on the availability of the primary inadequacy within the system: funding. Underfunding, socio-political and economic instability and corruption within the system and within the country precipitated the crisis in the system. Unless there is a radical paradigm shift within the system, according to the study, the system as it stands would remain mediocre and is unsustainable.

### **Research Hypothesis:**

Is there is a significant relationship between Nigeria's pre-colonial, colonial and the post-colonial educational system?

The study showed that there was significance between the pre-colonial, the colonial and the post-colonial educational systems.

### **More Conclusions:**

1. There is a relationship between the pre-colonial, the colonial and the post-colonial periods of Nigeria Nigerian history and Nigerian educational evolution and the current system of education. Two cultures have intermingled for good, creating a continuing cultural and value syncretism with implications affecting education because of the British socio-economic and political domination of Nigeria.
2. The key effect of the colonial heritage is the acculturated grammar school educational framework as a reference point for what it means to be educated in the post-colonial African countries.
3. Credentialization (paper qualification) has dominated over performance or aptitude. This has led to a misalignment between education for development and education for its own sake.
4. There is a corrupting effect within the education delivery systems including unethical practices like selling handouts and exam questions. Others include exchanging money or sexual favors for academic merits. There is evidence that there are administrative attempts to rein in these unethical practices.
5. There is a widespread loss of confidence in the education system and as it became clear that degrees were being sold and bought instead of earned.
6. The Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) executed in Nigeria at the behest of the IMF by corrupt military regimes especially through the period 1983-1999 negatively affected the funding of education. During this period, there was a massive reduction in funding for education in Nigeria based on the recommendations of the IMF whose goals had more to do with restructuring the Nigerian economy to align with globalization than whether Nigeria followed its education policies in order to deliver national development.
7. The research showed that the crisis in the system is still ongoing.
8. Nigerian education has suffered a structural collapse of the systems of supports that helped in the past to maintain integrity and autonomy in education.

9. The foundational framework has not changed in practice; it is still liberal arts centered.
10. Few in the public really know or fully understand the reality that the inherited British colonial educational framework was but a part of the colonizing enterprise that sought education not for the long term benefit of the colony but for the consolidation of the colonial exploitation of the colony. This lack of conscious awareness perhaps explains the continuing preference for the grammar school model of educating that has produced millions of educated Nigerians who are better prepared for the global markets than for Nigeria.
11. The research further showed that there is a dissonance embedded in the educational system between education and culture. The educated African has not given up on his ancestral or cultural roots of African centeredness or his newly acquired sense of Eurocentered concepts. The implication here is that having imbibed the values derivative of his western education, he finds the West not fully embracing him as a Westerner. He also finds his African roots not fully embracing him as fully African. The African so caught in the middle lives in a continuing and unresolved syncretism.
12. This state of being caught in the middle has often been referred to as mimicry whereby the African mimics the Europeans in life style and ideology without being accepted by that culture. This state of mimicry as a cultural reality has affected Nigerian educational formulation and systemic operation causing a dissonance.
13. The recommendations of post-colonial African writers like Franz Fanon, Wole Soyinka, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and others who recommend that the once colonized must now throw off the baggage of the colonizing ideology or assumptions have great influence in African literature but so far that influence has not impacted education policy in a deep way.
14. Africa must find a truly African epistemology to initiate a new way forward. The formerly imposed epistemology that placed Africa on the periphery and the colonizer at the center must be rejected but that has yet to be reflected in main stream African education. Without romanticizing a homogenous African past, there is evidence that Africa has a past of collective collaborative

action like the *Harambe* (unity) movement in Kenya. Infused into pragmatic curricula form, such African centered approaches should serve as pointers to a way forward that is practical and African centered. Africa should look inside for solutions. Africa is rich in possibilities for the new education future and is equally rich in potential alternatives to the status quo.

### **Recommendations and Implications for Further Research:**

1. The primary recommendation of this study is this: Nigerian education needs a paradigm shift that places African culture and epistemology at the center of African education instead of the periphery.
2. Nigerian education should not be dominated by politics or politicians.
3. Nigeria needs a consistent African centered philosophy of education that is sustainable and free from international and national or regional politics.
4. For the sake of the stability of the education system and to meet the objectives of the NPE, education funding should be irrevocably enshrined in the Nigerian constitution to free it from the socio-political vicissitudes of Nigeria.
5. The elitist colonial formulation of education inherited from the British should be rejected once and for all in preference of a pragmatic educational formulation that teaches skills needed for the specific Nigerian existential context.
6. Correspondingly, education should be wrested from the hands of Nigerian elites who are themselves often beneficiaries of the old system and accordingly economically able to access the benefits of first class education anywhere in the world. For education to truly be for the masses, it must have a mass orientation. The present educational system is still elitist and here also, a shift in policy is needed.
7. The inherited colonial liberal arts educational formulation should be rejected for a science heavy educational formulation so as to meet the development goals of the country.

8. To bridge the cultural and epistemological dissonance embedded in historical Nigerian education, a wider review of the curriculum should be prioritized, a new curriculum written. A larger percentage of the stakeholders should be enabled to participate in the review in order to give the new curriculum a truly grounded foundation and orientation.
9. Fully funded post-secondary science oriented open enrollment middle level colleges should be opened around the country. These colleges will capture the massive post-secondary youth graduated out of the on-going free education programs and others eager to acquire professional skills for 21<sup>st</sup> century digital economy jobs. These colleges should be structured like the community colleges of the United States. The number of colleges should be based on the population density of the area.
10. To stabilize the academic year, and in addition to prioritized funding, the government should adhere to labor contracts and other binding arbitrations with education professionals. Such will engender an avoidance of the incessant labor disputes that have disrupted the flow of the school year for decades now and increase the quality of education.
11. The Federal Government of Nigeria should avoid micro managing education and instead it should decentralize the educational system and zone it to the six geo-political regions which are closer to the regional needs of the population.
12. Further inquiry should investigate the long term effect of colonialism on the social psyche of the Nigerian society.
13. Further inquiry should investigate the long term effect of a century of liberal arts education on the economic development of Nigeria.
14. More study should be done to find ways to acquaint the learning population to become intellectually aware of the limited nature of colonial education.
15. More study should be conducted to articulate and systematize “local knowledge” or gnosis and make this a standard part of African education.

16. More work is needed to assess the short term and long term effects of privatization of education and the commoditization of education in a Nigeria that is not fully out from under the colonial heritage politically and economically.
17. Complete and unabridged autonomy should be returned to all schools especially the tertiary institutions as to keep politics out, and institutionalize merit. This way, confidence in the system would be restored and Nigerian education would again attain its internal integrity in the drive for academic excellence, national development and cultural orientation.
18. The final recommendation is that because Africa is an ancient culture, the continent has a yet untapped reservoir for policy formulations as such affect education and other structures of society; it is therefore highly recommended that Nigeria, as the largest African nation look inside for solutions.



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## **Appendices**

### **APPENDIX 1**

#### **Focus Group University of Uyo (UNIYO)**

##### **Interview Questions Session I**

1. What do you think of the Nigerian education system as a whole?
2. What is working in the system?
3. What is not working?
4. How was education in the past years: pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial and during the latter military regimes?
5. When did the change in the system begin for the better?
6. How is the system now?
7. Are you hopeful about where the system is heading?
8. Is the Nigerian educational system capable of producing workers for the 21<sup>st</sup> century digital workforce?
9. What is needed in the Nigerian education system and why?
10. Identify the major areas of strength in the system today (2011)?
11. What is the future of the Nigerian educational system?

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Focus Group University of Uyo**

#### **Interview Questions Session II**

1. What do you think of the University of Uyo (UNIYO) educational system?
2. What is not working at your university?
3. What is working at your university?
4. How was it before at your university before the return to civilian rule 1999?
5. What has changed and when did meaningful improvement begin?
6. How are the conditions now at your university?
7. Where is the future of the educational system at your university?
8. Is the Akwa Ibom educational system (9-3-4 system) capable of producing workers for the 21<sup>st</sup> century digital workforce?
9. What is needed in the Akwa Ibom educational system?
10. Identify the major areas of need for the system and why?
11. Identify the major areas of strength?
12. What is the future of the Akwa Ibom educational system?